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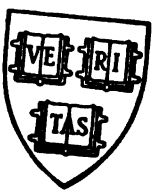

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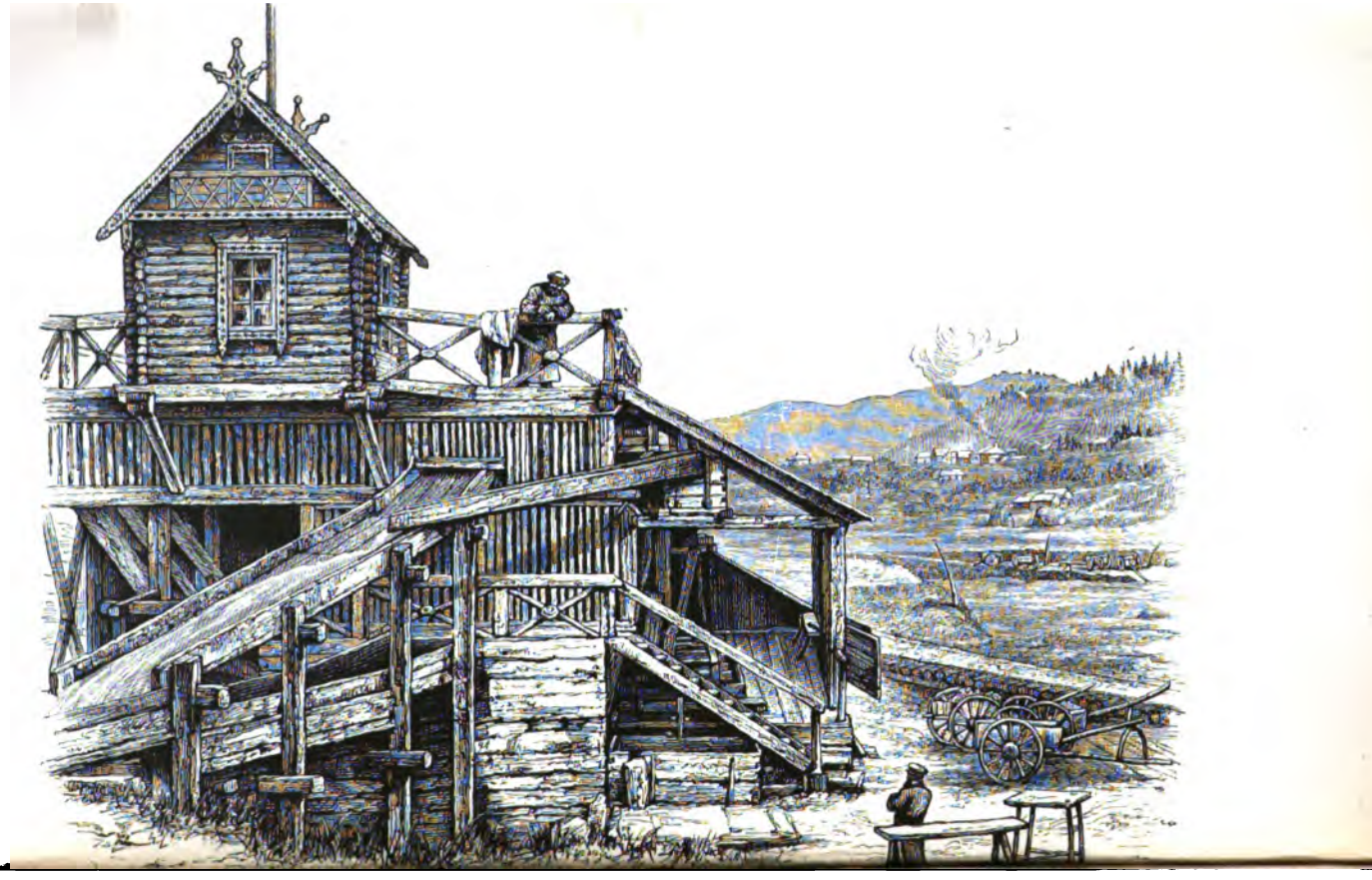

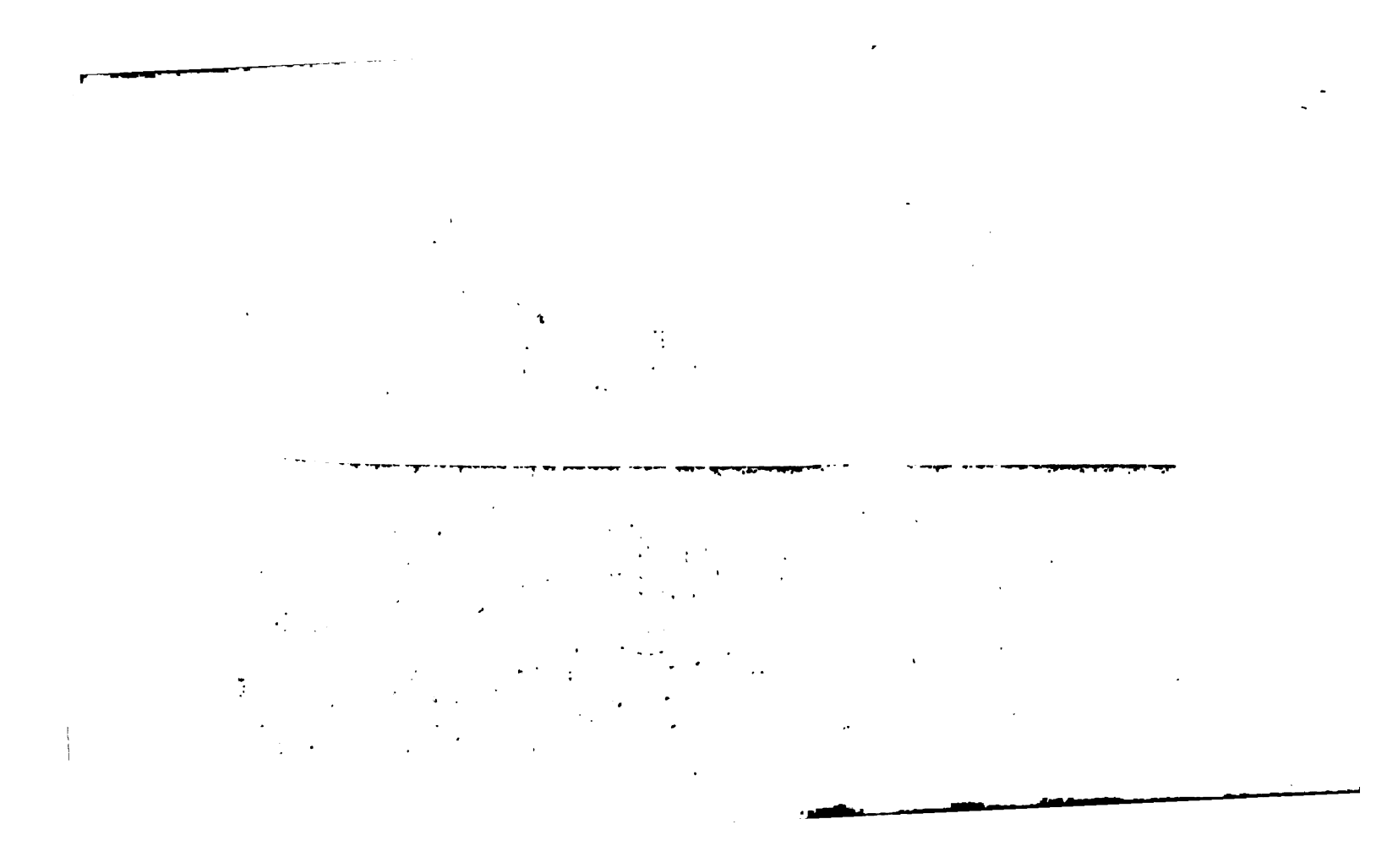

THROUGH SIBERIA

By HENRY LANSDELL, D.D., F.R.G.S.

With Illustrations and Maps

THIRD EDITION.

Boston
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND CO.
1882

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CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, AND LATE

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND, IN GRATEFUL

APPRECIATION OF OFFICIAL KINDNESS

MORE THAN ONCE ACCORDED ME

IN FURTHERING MY VISITS

TO THE PRISONS OF

EUROPE

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

BEING about to leave England on a projected tour through Russian Central Asia, and the second edition of "Through Siberia" having become nearly exhausted, I find myself called upon to make preparation for a third and cheaper issue. It is only necessary to say that the subject-matter of the third and second editions is alike, the third edition, however, being bound in one volume, and printed on thinner paper, with somewhat fewer illustrations.

H. L.

BLACKHEATH,
21st June, 1882.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

BEING unexpectedly but agreeably obliged to prepare a second edition before the day for the public appearance of the first, I can do little more than express my gratitude for the favour with which my book has been received, and repeat what has already been printed. The kind and too favourable reviews that have thus far come under my notice seem to call for little remark but of thanks. One journal, however—the *St. James's Gazette*—has stated, on the authority of a Russian informant, that 'official orders were sent before me to the prisons to make things wear a favourable aspect for my visit.' I venture therefore here to repeat what I wrote to the Editor (but which he did not think fit to publish), that if his Russian informant, or any other, thinks that I have been duped or misinformed, I am perfectly ready to be questioned, and shall be happy to discuss the question in the public press, provided only that my opponent give facts, dates, names, and places, and do not hide behind general statements and imperson alities. My own conviction is that in the overwhelming majority of cases, at all events, I saw Siberian prison affairs in their normal condition.

With the exception, then, of a corrected note which appeared on page 37, vol. i., a slight re-arrangement of the bibliography and appendices, a few verbal alterations, and a *new and improved index*, this second edition is the same as the first.

H. L.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH,
20th February, 1882.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THIS book is a traveller's story, enriched from the writings of others. In San Francisco an American Bishop said to me, "I hope, sir, you will give us your experience, for Siberia is a country of which we know so little." Accordingly, on my return, two courses presented themselves—either to confine myself to an account of my personal adventures, or to supplement them from published information, and describe the country as a whole. I chose the latter course, and the result is in the reader's hands. At the end of the work will be found a list of books consulted, to the authors of many of which I must acknowledge myself indebted for much scientific and technical information.

My speciality in Siberia was the visitation of its prisons and penal institutions, considered, however, not so much from an economic or administrative as from a philanthropic and religious point of view. Much has been written concerning them that is very unsatisfactory, and some things that are absolutely false. One author published "My Exile in Siberia" who never went there. "Escapes" and so-called "Revelations" of Siberia have been written by others who were banished only a few days' journey beyond the Urals;

whereas it is only east of the Baikal that the severest forms of exile life begin. None, so far as I know, who have escaped or been released from the mines, have written the tale of what they endured, and very few authors have been in a position even to describe what the penal mines are like.

It has been comparatively easy, therefore, in England for writers to exaggerate on this subject almost as they pleased, because scarcely any one could contradict them. Comparatively few travellers cross Northern Asia to the Amur. I doubt if any *English* author has preceded me. Probably also I was the first foreigner ever allowed to go through the Siberian prisons and mines. Perhaps none before have asked permission. That I obtained such an authorization astonished my friends, though the open manner in which the letter was granted seemed to show that the authorities had nothing to hide. A master-key was put into my hand that opened every door. I went where I would, and almost when I would; and on no single occasion was admission refused, though often applied for at a moment's notice. Statistics also were freely given me; but this was "not so writ in the bond." An afterthought, in Siberia, emboldened me to ask for them in various places, and they were usually furnished then and there. All these are displayed before the reader. I have exaggerated nothing,—kept nothing back.

I speak thus in case I should be thought to have written with a bias; but I had no reason to be other than impartial. Of politics I know next to nothing, and so was not prejudiced in this direction. Nor had I anything to gain by withholding, or to fear from telling, the whole of the truth. I did not travel

as the agent or representative of any religious body. Two societies, indeed, at my request, made me grants of books, and a generous friend provided the cost of travel; but the expedition was a private one, and implicated none but myself. I could not, of course, see matters as a prisoner would; but I wish to state that, having visited prisons in nearly every country of Europe, I have given here an unprejudiced statement of what I saw and heard in the prisons and mines of Siberia

That a foreigner, flying across Europe and Asia, as I did, is exceedingly likely to receive false impressions and form erroneous conclusions, is obvious to every one, and I claim no exemption; for though I have journeyed in Russia, from Archangel to Mount Ararat, yet my experience is that of a traveller only, and not of a resident. I do not even speak Russ, but have been dependent on interpreters, or information received in French. I trust, therefore, that no one may be misled by taking my testimony for more than it is worth. I have tried to be accurate, and that is all I can say.

Perhaps I may add, however, that my proof-sheets have been revised by Russian friends among others, and that most of the chapters concerning exile life have been submitted not only to a Russian Inspector of Prisons, but also to released political exiles who have worked in the mines. The latter endorse what I have said, and (with reference to the chapters on "Exiles," "Political Prisoners," and the "Mines of Nertchinsk") the Inspector has done me the compliment to write, "What you say is so perfectly correct that your book may be taken as a standard, even by Russian authorities." I have good hope, therefore, that in this

feature of my work, at all events, I have avoided misrepresentation.

On scientific subjects I cannot speak with authority; but I have been allowed to submit the proof-sheets to various friends, who have kindly read them with an eye to their particular studies. My thanks, accordingly, are due to Sir Andrew Ramsay, LL.D., F.R.S., Director-General of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom; to Mr. James Glaisher, F.R.S., formerly of the meteorological department of the Greenwich Observatory; and to Mr. Trelawney Saunders, Geographer to the India Office. Mr. Henry Seebohm, F.L.S., F.Z.S., has read such paragraphs as relate to zoology and ornithology; and Mr. Henry Howorth, F.S.A., author of "The History of the Mongols," has afforded suggestions from his extensive reading in Siberian ethnology. I am also indebted for information concerning many Sclavonic words, manners, and customs to Mrs. Cattley, formerly of Petersburg, and a great traveller in Russia; and to the Rev. C. Slegg Ward, M.A., Vicar of Wootton St. Lawrence, for literary help. It is difficult to restrain my pen from mentioning others—the scores of friends who gave me introductions, the scores of others who received and honoured them—but if I once begin in this direction, where shall I end? I can only say that, for hospitality to strangers, Siberia carries the palm before every country in which I have travelled, and that from the day I crossed the Russian frontier till I reached the Pacific I met with nothing but kindness.

H. L.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH,
20th December, 1881.

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OBSERVANDA.

In proper names the letters should be pronounced as follows:—*A* as in f*a*ther; *e* as in th*e*re; *i* as in rav*i*ne; *o* as in g*o*; *u* as in l*u*nar; and the diphthongs *ai* and *ei* as in h*i*de. The consonants are pronounced as in English, save that *kh* is guttural, as in the Scotch lo*ch*.

The dates are given according to the English reckoning, being in advance of the Russian by twelve days.

All temperatures are expressed according to the scale of Fahrenheit.

The ordinary paper rouble is reckoned at two shillings, its value at the time of the Author's visit; but before the Russo-Turkish war its value was half-a-crown and upwards.

English weights and measures are to be understood unless otherwise stated.

The Russian	Arshin	equals	28 inches	English
„	Sajen	„	7 feet	„
„	Verst	„	$\frac{2}{3}$ mile	„
„	Pound	„	14·43 ounces	„
„	Pud (or Pood)	„	36 lbs.	„
„	Rouble (or 100 Kopecks)	„	2 shillings	„
„	*Silver* rouble	„	3 „	„

D AND 5000 BY WATER.

W. & A. K. Johnston, Edinburgh

THROUGH SIBERIA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Object of the journey.—Interest in prisons.—Visitation of prisons in 1874.—Distribution of religious literature in Russia.—Tour round Bothnian Gulf, 1876.—To Russo-Turkish war, 1877.—To Archangel, 1878.—Origin of Siberian journey.—Alba Hellman and her correspondence.—The way opened.—Projected efforts of usefulness.—Books to be distributed.—Final resolve.

THE object that took me through Siberia was of a philanthropic and religious character; and before proceeding to a general description of the country, I should like to acquaint the reader with the circumstances that led me there. My interest in prisons dates from a visit to Newgate jail in 1867, followed by others to prisons at Winchester, Portland, Millbank, Dover, York, Exeter, Geneva, Guernsey, and Edinburgh: but this interest amounted to little more than curiosity. Two years later it took a practical turn. My summer holidays up to that time had been spent on the principle, "Play when you play, and work when you work,"—a proverb that is doubtless true, but which I had not found entirely satisfactory. I was minded,

therefore, to test another saying, that "the way to be happy is to be useful," and in 1874 was casting about as to how the principle could be applied to a tour of five weeks through seven countries, not one of whose tongues I could speak, when the visitation of continental prisons suggested itself, and the distribution therein and elsewhere of suitable literature. The Committee of the Religious Tract Society generously placed a supply at my disposal, and in company with the Rev. J. P. Hobson, then curate of Greenwich, I started for Russia *viâ* Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, intending to return through Poland, Austria, and Prussia. We saw the prisons of Copenhagen and Stockholm, but they were well supplied with books, and needed not our help; whereas, in the old castles used as prisons at Åbo and Wiborg, our papers were thankfully accepted, and in Russia quite a surprise awaited us. Without reason, I had feared that perhaps the orthodox Russians would decline to receive books from Protestants, as do the Romans. We found, however, that they would accept such books as had been approved by the censor, and accordingly we sent 2,000 pamphlets into the prisons of Petersburg, reserving a third thousand for giving away on the railway to Moscow, not knowing at that time that for such open distribution a permission is needed. I can never forget the surprise of the people and their desire to get the books. The peasants came and kissed our hands; the railway guards directed to us the attention of the station-masters, who came to receive our gifts. Priests took the books, and approved them; and many who offered money in return were puzzled to see it declined. Our stock was soon exhausted, and I determined some

day to make a tour in Russia to distribute on a larger scale.

In 1876 my holiday weeks were spent in a journey across Norway and Sweden and round the Gulf of Bothnia. Twelve thousand tracts were distributed, and visits made to prisons and hospitals, those of Finland being found inadequately supplied with both Scriptures and other books. On my return I brought this before the Committee of the Bible Society, and asked for a copy of the Scriptures for every room in every prison, and for each bed in every hospital, in all Finland. This they kindly granted, so far as to offer to bear half the expense with the Finnish Bible Society; and the plan, after some delay, was carried out. Scriptures were also to be provided, at my request, for the Finnish institutions for the deaf and dumb, and for the saloons of the steamers plying on the Scandinavian coasts.

In 1877 Roumania and the seat of the Russo-Turkish war was chosen for my holiday resort, with a view to being useful in the Russian hospitals. But I was too early, and my vacation too short; so that after visiting, on the outward trip, some of the prisons of Austria and Hungary, I returned, doing the like through Servia, Sclavonia, the Tyrol, Basle, and Paris. The mass of the prisoners were Roman Catholics, for whom I do not remember a single case in which the Scriptures were provided. Some of the authorities, however, said they would accept them if sent, and I therefore asked the Bible Society again for a liberal grant for the prisoners, the sick, and others of the countries through which I had passed. They were willing to make the grant, but the local agents reported many difficulties, and the result fell short of my expectations.

In 1878, therefore, I resolved upon a change of tactics, to take my ammunition with me, and carry out my cherished scheme for Russia. Considerable difficulties, however, lay in the way. An Englishman, unable to speak the language, going into the interior of Russia to distribute books and pamphlets, in the year of the Berlin Congress, towards the close of the war, would certainly not have been safe. No amount of official papers and permissions would have kept him out of the clutches of ignorant officials. It seemed necessary, therefore, to take an interpreter; and as the transport of heavy luggage in Russia is slow, and my books would accompany me as personal baggage, it was clear that the cost would be a great increase to holiday expenses. A generous friend, however, at this juncture, as also subsequently, came to my aid; and in the month of June I trotted out of Petersburg with about two waggonloads of books, a companion, an interpreter, and a sufficiency of official letters. We went by rail through Moscow and Jaroslav to Vologda, and thence by steamer on the Suchona and Dwina to Archangel. We distributed everywhere, —to priests and people, in prisons, hospitals, and monasteries, and created such a stir in some of the small towns that people besieged our rooms by day and even by night. Our travel was necessarily so quick that we could not always inform the police beforehand of what we were doing, and more than once they came (as was their duty) to arrest us; but our encounters always ended amicably, and we reached home after a happy six weeks' tour, extending over 5,500 miles, in the course of which we distributed 25,000 Scriptures and tracts. These experiences in

some measure prepared me for my longer journey in 1879, the origin of which was somewhat remarkable.

When travelling round the Gulf of Bothnia in 1876, my steamer unexpectedly stayed for a day at a town on the coast of Finland. I was anxious to visit the hospital, and was inquiring about a horse, when a passenger said she had friends in the town, who, she thought, could render assistance. I went with her; and that simple incident may be said to have originated my subsequent tour through the prisons of Siberia; for it was followed by correspondence with a lady member of the family to whom I was introduced, Miss Alba Hellman, who began by modestly asking me, chiefly because I was an Englishman and the only one she knew, whether I could not do something for the welfare of the Siberian exiles. I confess that at first I thought this the most extraordinary request ever put to me, and it seemed too great an undertaking even to be thought of. Already immersed in work, regular and self-imposed, I had no time or means for such an undertaking; and if the money were forthcoming, who would go? Another question, too, arose: Would the Russian Government allow anything to be done?

The case of my Finnish correspondent, however, was a touching one. When in health she had been wont, like Elizabeth Fry, but on a smaller scale, to spend part of her time in visiting prisoners. Now, acute heart disease forbade such visits, and even compelled her to sleep in a sitting posture, so that for 2,068 nights, or nearly seven years, she never went to bed. My coming to Finland, visiting prisons, had awakened memories of her former work, and she set

herself, after my departure, to write me a letter in English. She had had only a few lessons in this language when a girl; but, possessing a Swedish and English New Testament in parallel columns, and a dictionary, she set herself, with an industry and patience almost incredible, to find clauses and expressions that conveyed her meaning in Swedish, and then to copy their English equivalents, her letter ending, for example, "Here are many faults, but I pray you have me excused." The force of her language, however, was unmistakable, thus: "You (English) have sent missionarys round the all world, to China, Persia, Palestina, Africa, the Islands of Sandwich, to many places of the Continent of Europe; but to the great, great Siberia, where so much is to do, you not have sent missionarys. Have you not a Morrison, a Moffatt, for Siberia? Pastor Lansdell, go you yourself to Siberia!"

What, then, could I say to this? To have spoken the real language of my thoughts would have been cruel. So I thought to shelve the question by returning an oracular answer, that "the letter contained much that was interesting, and that I would think the matter over." My correspondent, however, was not to be discouraged, and wrote another letter, giving further information concerning Siberia, and drawing a gloomy picture of the religious condition of the natives and exiles. Others followed, and at last I began to think that, after all, the project was not quite so unfeasible as it first appeared to be. My generous friend, who had read the letters and was interested, both urged me on and again offered help; and when it was determined that I should leave a clerical appointment I had held

for ten easy and happy years, I resolved, in the absence of another suitable post presenting itself, at once to "rough it" for a summer in the wilds of Asiatic Russia.

But what could I do towards the object my friend had at heart? Ignorance of the Russian language and of the Siberian dialects would prevent my speaking to the people. I might, however, visit prisons, hospitals, and mines, and at least provide them with the Scriptures in various languages, and with books, as in previous holidays. When travelling in the Russian interior in 1878, persons were met with who had never seen a complete New Testament, and I reasoned that a general distribution of such books in Siberia, whether by sale or gift, would be doubly useful, besides which I meant to be on the look-out for such other opportunities of usefulness as might present themselves and be allowed me.

But what were the books you were to give away? and how is it that you were allowed to distribute them? are questions that have often been asked with surprise. An answer to the first will prepare the way for the second. The Scriptures included the four Gospels, the Book of Psalms, and the New Testament. These were for the most part in Russian; but there were a few copies in Polish, French, German, and Tatar, with certain portions of the Old Testament for the Buriats in Mongolian, and for the Jews in Hebrew. Besides these Scriptures there were copies of the *Rooski Rabotchi*, an adapted reprint in Russian of the *British Workman*, full of pictures, and well suited to the masses; also a large well-executed engraving, with the story written around, of the parable of the Prodigal Son, together with broad-sheets suitable for hospital

walls, and thousands of Russian tracts. The Scriptures were printed for the Bible Society by the Holy Synod, and the tracts had passed the censor's hands. All was therefore in order, and before going to Archangel I had received a permanent legitimation to distribute, duly endorsed by the police.

So far, therefore, things in England looked promising for Siberia, but the way thither was by no means clear. In April, 1879, the plague was said to be raging in Russia, and towards the end of that month came one of the attempts on the late Emperor's life. This led to Petersburg being placed in a state of siege, and few of my friends felicitated me on my intention to go thither. Some thought I should not obtain the required permissions for Siberia, and advised accordingly. But having always before succeeded through the courtesy of the Russians in getting what I asked, I resolved to be deaf as an adder to everything short of a denial at the capital from the lips of the authorities, and, being thus resolved, I set out on my journey.

CHAPTER II.

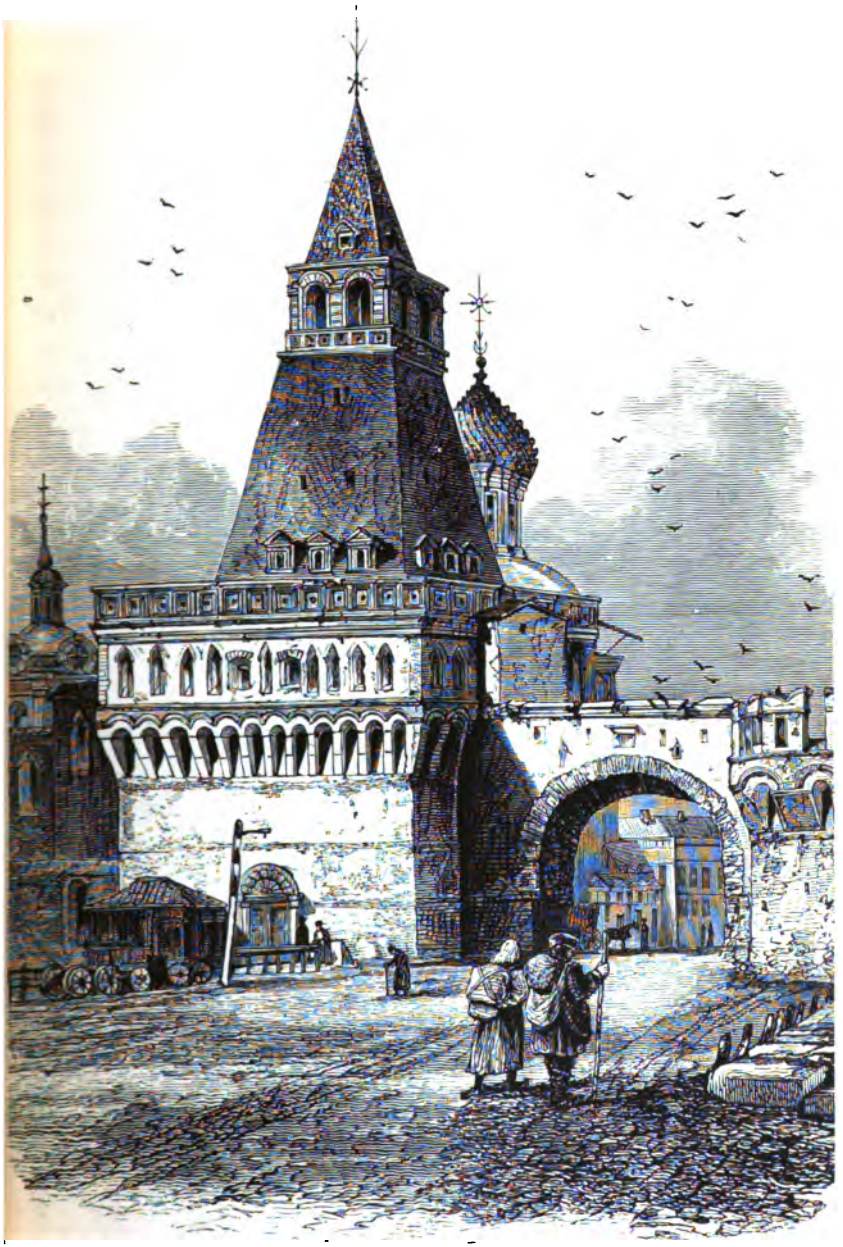
ACROSS EUROPE.

Departure for Petersburg.—Official receptions.—Minister of the Interior.—Metropolitan of Moscow.—Introductions.—Books forwarded.—Departure for Moscow.—Nijni Novgorod.—Site of the fair.—Joined by interpreter.—Kasan.—Bulgarian antiquities.—Neighbouring heathen.—Idolatrous objects and practices.—Departure from Kasan.—The Volga and the Kama.—Arrival at Perm.

ON Wednesday morning, 30th April, 1879, I left London, and reached Petersburg on the following Saturday evening, to find at my hotel a pleasant welcome in the shape of an invitation to breakfast with Lord Dufferin on the Monday morning. This was due to letters with which I had been favoured from high quarters in England, and one result of which, thanks to the kindness of the British Ambassador, was an introductory letter to M. Makoff, the Minister of the Interior, which I presented to his Excellency on Tuesday. Whilst waiting in the ante-room with other suitors, there was time for cogitation as to what the answer might be. My Petersburg friends gave me small hope of success; on the contrary, one of them, high in authority, who had helped me before, had gone so far as to say, "Why, it is not likely that, with so many political prisoners therein, they will allow him to go through the prisons of Siberia now." I drew encouragement, however, from the fact that a ministerial

After a busy stay of nine days in the Russian capital, I left for Moscow on the afternoon of Monday, the 12th of May, and arrived the following morning. The only business that detained me there was to inquire of some ladies, who devote themselves to work among the prisoners, how many and what books they were distributing among the exiles, so that I might not do their work over again. I found, however, that their labours were directed more especially to the temporal good of the prisoners—looking after their wives, placing out their children, finding them clothes, and such like useful works, rather than seeking directly their spiritual good, though this had to some extent been attempted by lending and occasionally giving them books to read in the prison. Accordingly, I left Moscow by rail on Wednesday evening, to arrive after thirteen hours at Nijni Novgorod, on the Volga.

May is not a good time to see this famous place. The river overflows its banks in spring to a depth of several feet, and covers the site of the wonderful fair, in anticipation of which the lower storeys of the warehouses and buildings are cleared; and to cleanse them before July is one of the first things to be done by the owners, who with their goods arrive yearly from all parts of the world. I was rowed in a boat through the streets (which are called after the names of the merchandise sold therein) to see the Chinese quarter, with pagoda-like buildings; the Persian quarter, the two cathedrals, the theatre, the Governor's house, etc., all of which are used only during the fair, and were now empty. The nearest approach to a fair that I saw was a gathering near the entrance to the Kremlin, where were men standing with their stock-in-trade in



THE NICHOLAS GATE, MOSCOW. *Page* 12.

their hands or slung over their shoulders—one with a pair of boots, another with a shirt, and a third with a pair of trousers or other garments, and for which each was ready to bargain and chaffer. Hitherto I had travelled alone. I now stayed at Nijni Novgorod to be joined by a young man who was to be my companion and interpreter, and then, leaving by steamer on Friday at mid-day, we reached Kasan early on Saturday morning, there to spend Sunday, the 18th of May.

The covered heads and veiled faces of the women, together with the tawny porters carrying their huge burdens, speedily reminded us that we had reached an ancient Tatar city. The only tourists' lion we visited was Mr. Lichatcheff's collection of Bulgarian antiquities. He very kindly and politely showed us through the rooms of his house, which were crammed with curiosities. Among them were rude implements of the stone age, ancient oriental lamps, and ancient crosses, one of which, dating from the eleventh or twelfth century, was without the foot-piece now found on the Russian cross, which foot-piece, our informant considered, was not used on Russian crosses in the earliest times. There were also some stone Byzantine crosses. The Bulgarian antiquities had been found on the banks of the Volga, showing the location of that people before their migration further south.

Another point of interest in Kasan must not be passed over. I had supposed that heathen rites and practices were now in Europe a thing of the past. We heard, however, of five nationalities scattered through Russia, but found more, especially in the Kasan government, who, though nominally Christian,

still resort to idolatrous superstitions. They are called Tcheremisi, Mordvar, Vodeki, Tchuvashi, and Tatars; and the Russian Government is adopting means for their enlightenment by taking peasant boys from among them, and training them for schoolmasters and priests. A seminary devoted to this purpose, situated near the Tatar quarter of the town, was shown to us by the principal, Professor Ilminski.*

In or near the Bishop's house in the Kremlin we were introduced to Mr. Zoloneetski, who trains young men to be mission priests to the nationalities whence they have been brought. In 1878 he had twenty-one students, some of them from the seminary just mentioned. He gives them lectures on aboriginal languages, customs, and superstitions, and shows them how to bring the natives to Christianity. This he does in part by exposing various idolatrous objects, of which he has a curious collection. Among them was a Tchuvash idol, consisting of a block of wood, to which pieces of cloth were brought as offerings. This had been used less than ten years before. Another piece of superstition came from the Tcheremisi,† and was less than

* The Government provides support for 150 scholars, half of whom are Russians, and the remaining half are from the five nationalities already mentioned. They have no difficulty in procuring the requisite number of scholars. Such as can say their small Russian catechism intelligently are received, and kept for three years as pupil-teachers, at the expiration of which time they serve the Government for six years by way of return for their education, and receive salaries of from twelve to thirty pounds a year. A New Testament, we found (but not the Bible), is provided for each youth in the higher classes.

† Their worship was thus described: The priest takes in one hand a piece of burning wood, and in the other a branch (such as we saw, and on which the leaves were still green, though dry), and then walks in a circle, the area of which is thus, for the time being, consecrated for worship. Then he fastens round a tree a withe, and sticks therein a branch with

twelve months old. There was also to be seen a rudely-cut box containing coins. Some of them were ancient, but were supposed to have been offered recently by Tatars, nominally Christian. It would seem that a Tatar sometimes makes a vow to the spirit of the forest to dedicate a horse, cow, or some other animal; but not having a victim, or not having it to spare at the time, he leaves money as a pledge of good faith, and then, when able to fulfil his vow, reclaims his coin.

Some of these objects had been obtained through friends and some by fraud, but there was a curious story connected with the boxes. A missionary priest (a friend of our informant), knowing of their existence, went to a family in his parish, and asked if he might take away their idolatrous things. They answered at first in the negative; but, after he had left the house, a woman came out to draw water, and told him she thought it would be much better if he would *steal* the things, for then they would have less money to bring and fewer prayers to say. The priest, therefore, returned at night, when the family pretended to be soundly asleep (so that the spirit might not be offended with what took place whilst they were unconscious), mounted the loft, took the things, and subsequently gave them to our informant.

the bark peeled something like a whip, which is supposed to represent a fir-tree; on this is hung a piece of lead, previously melted, poured into cold water, and molten so as to form roughly the figure of a head, which is called an *eeta*. Towards this they afterwards say their prayers. The priest kills the victim, which may be a horse, a cow, a chicken, a duck, etc., and sprinkles the blood on the tree and the withe. (The blood was yet visible on the one we saw.) Then they proceed to peel or chip pieces of wood, making them fly off in the direction of the tree; and according as the chips fall, with the bark or the white side upwards, so they divine an answer to their prayer. The branch we saw was brought away by a friend of our informant just after the offering.

We quitted Kasan on Monday morning in one of Lubimoff's steamers, and, after proceeding two or three hours down the Volga, left that river to finish its career of 2,200 miles, whilst we turned into one of its affluents, the Kama, which is no mean river in itself, having a course of 1,400 miles. The junction of the two streams presents a fine expanse of water, but the banks are too flat to be pretty. Steamboat travelling in Russia is not expensive, the first-class fare from Nijni Novgorod to Perm, a four days' journey, being only 36*s*.

After a voyage of three days and a half from Kasan we reached Perm, where the people were in great excitement consequent on the burning of two "quartals," or large blocks of buildings. The roofs and houses of the town were described as being covered, during the previous night, with women, watching lest sparks should fall on their property, whilst their husbands helped to extinguish the fire; and so great was the fear of a general conflagration, that some sent their wives and families into the neighbouring villages. Others we saw encamped by the bank of the river, whilst on a grass plot near a church were others tired out and fast asleep beside the chattels they had rescued. Not long before, Orenburg and Irbit had been burnt, and were supposed by some to have been wilfully set on fire, and so excited were the inhabitants of Perm, and so ready to snap up persons at all suspected, that we were cautioned, as being strangers, to walk in the middle of the road. We then visited the hospital, saw the Governor, and left some books for the Perm institutions; but I was reserving my strength for Siberia, and the same evening the train was to carry us to the top of the Urals.

CHAPTER III

THE URALS TO TIUMEN.

A new railway.—The Ural range.—Outlook into Russia in Asia.—Nijni Tagil.—The Demidoff mines and hospital.—May weather.—Russian railways.—Arrival at Ekaterineburg.—An orphanage.—Precious stones.—Orenburg shawls.—Tarantass and luggage.—Departure for Tiumen.—The exiles.—Visits to the authorities.

THOSE who have hitherto written of journeys to Siberia have told of a dismal drive from Perm to Ekaterineburg; but this misfortune did not fall to our lot, since in the autumn of 1878 a railway was opened over the mountains, and the journey is now accomplished in about four-and-twenty hours. The distance is 312 miles, and between the two termini are about 30 stations.*

From the prominence given in maps of Europe to the Ural chain, one is apt from childhood to expect in these mountains something grand. The entire length of the range, including its continuation in Novaia

* Of the three divisions, the Northern or barren Ural, as the Russians call it, beginning at the source of the Pechora, is the most elevated and the least known. The Southern Ural begins about midway between Perm and Orenburg, and descends to the banks of the Ural river. It is a pastoral country, and about 100 miles in width. The range is here less than 3,000 feet in height. The central Ural may be considered as a wide undulation, beginning on the west on the banks of the Kama. Perm, situated on the right bank of the river, is 378 feet above the sea level, and on the post road to Ekaterineburg the highest point is 1,638 feet, which, if my reckoning is correct, is 40 feet less than the highest station on the railway.

Zemlia, is about 1,700 miles. Its highest peak, however, does not attain to more than 6,000 feet, and many parts of the range are not more than 2,000 feet above the sea level. No part of it is permanently covered with snow. Travellers by the old route describe, in passing it, a never-failing object of interest on the frontier in the shape of a stone, on one side of which is written "Europe" and on the other "Asia,' across which, of course, an English boy would stride, and announce that he had stood in two quarters of the globe at once. Travellers by the new route miss this opportunity; but they have its equivalent in three border stations, one of which is called "*Europa*," the next "*Ural*," and the third "*Asia*," through which those who have journeyed can say what no other travellers can, that they have passed by rail from one quarter of the globe into another.

Thus the ease with which one reaches the summit of the Urals is somewhat disappointing, but no such thoughts are suggested by an outlook into the immense country that now lies before the traveller. There stretches far before him a region known as Russia in Asia, the dimensions of which are very hard for the mind to realize. It measures 4,000 miles from east to west, about 2,000 from north to south, and covers

I set my aneroid at Perm, and found that at the fourth station, Seleenka, a distance of 172 miles, we had mounted 470 feet; the next 22 miles brought us down again to 120 feet, after which for 60 miles we continued to ascend to Bisir, which registered 1,300 feet above Perm, and was the highest station on the road. Level ground succeeded for about 30 miles to the border station, after which in 50 miles we descended 750 feet to Shaitanka, 10 miles beyond which we had remounted 200 feet; and on this level we kept to Iset, the last station but one. The road then descended about 150 feet to Ekaterineburg, which is said to be 858 feet above the sea level.

nearly five and three-quarter millions of square miles. It is larger by two millions of square miles than the whole of Europe; about twice as big as Australia, and nearly one hundred times as large as England.

The general aspect of the surface may be easily described. The Altai range of mountains, with its offshoots to the east, forms the general features of the southern boundary, and from these heights the land gradually slopes towards the northern *tundras* or bogs, which extend to the frozen ocean. The country is intersected by three of the largest rivers in the world, the Obi, the Yenesei, and the Lena, not one of which is much less than 3,000 miles long, and all of them, through great part of the year, flow under masses of ice to the Arctic Ocean. A fourth river, the Amur, rising in the Yablonoi mountains, which may be regarded as a part of the eastern slopes of the Altai chain, runs a course also of more than 2,000 miles, but takes an easterly direction, forming part of the southern boundary of the country, and empties itself into the Gulf of Tartary.

The country largely consists of immense steppes marshes, and pools. Lakes, properly so called, are not numerous, but the greatest of them, the "Baikal," is in some respects the most remarkable in the world. No less remarkable is the great variety of the inhabitants. They are sometimes classified into five typical races: *Sclavonic* (including Russians and Poles); *Finnish* (including Finns, Voguls, Ostjaks, Samoyedes, Yuraki); *Turkish* (including Tatars, Kirghese, Kalmuks, Yakutes); *Mongolian* (including Manchu, Buriats, and Tunguses —the last of various denominations); and *Chinese*, with whom may be classed, though not very accurately, the

Gilyaks and Ainos. In fact, an ethnographical map of Asiatic Russia I bought at Petersburg shows therein no less than 30 peoples or nations.*

Many of them, it is true, are but feebly represented, for the entire population does not number more inhabitants than are to be found in seven of the counties of England, and they have not enough men and women in Russian Asia to put one of each in every square mile, whereas every square mile of the seven English counties alluded to has on an average 573 inhabitants. It is difficult to give exact statistics, because, from the wandering life led by many of the aborigines, it is impossible to ascertain their number, and so authorities differ; but the total population, including Russians, is estimated at about 8,000,000. Our attention, however, is to be chiefly confined to Siberia, and it should not be forgotten that Siberia is not co-extensive with the whole of Asiatic Russia, and does not begin, properly speaking, till Ekaterineburg is passed. We have been merely taking a look, from the government of Perm, out of European into Asiatic Russia; this government, as also that of Orenburg, lying partly in Europe and partly in Asia.

Before descending to the foot of the Urals, we arrive at Nijni Tagilsk. At this place we halted for a day to

* 1. Slavs.
2. Zeryani.
3. Voguls.
4. Votyaks.
5. Tatars.
6. Kirghese of little horde.
7. Kirghese of middle horde.
8. Kirghese of great horde.
9. Buruti Kirghese.
10. Karakalpaks.
11. Sarti.
12. Uzbeki.
13. Turks.
14. Altai Kalmuks.
15. Teleuti.
16. Ostjaks.
17. Samoyedes.
18. Yuraki.
19. Yakutes.
20. Tunguse.
21. Goldi.
22. Gilyaks.
23. Yukagirs.
24. Chukchees.
25. Koriaks.
26. Kamchadales.
27. Ainos.
28. Buriats.
29. Manchu.
30. Chinese.

look over the famous Demidoff mines and works. There had been a fire in the town, as at Perm, on the night preceding our arrival; and in seven hours 78 houses had been burnt. Pieces of smoking wood were still flying about. The common people, as before, attributed the fire to incendiaries, such as escaped prisoners, who hoped to profit by the turmoil, and find an occasion for plunder; but more thoughtful people traced it to accidental causes. Demidoff's workmen had been called out at night to assist as firemen, and were in consequence resting. We could not, therefore, see everything in motion, but enough was visible to make it clear that they were carrying on enormous metallurgical operations. One of the remarkable things to be noticed was a surface mine of magnetic iron ore, blasted and dug out in terraces, carted down by horses and taken to the furnace, where the ore proves so rich that it yields 68 per cent. of iron. We also descended a copper-mine, the mineral from which yields 5 per cent. of metal. We were dressed for the occasion in top-boots, leather hats, and appropriate blouses and trousers, each carrying a lamp, and thus by ladders we descended one shaft of 600 feet and came up another, the water meanwhile trickling upon us freely. At the bottom of the mine they were erecting an English machine for pumping 80 cubic feet of water per minute to the surface. In the engine-room two men at a time spend eight hours daily, for which they each receive in money about fifteen pence. We promised ourselves, as a great feature in the descent of the copper-mine, the seeing of malachite in its natural state, and we were not disappointed. The captain took us through

long galleries of timber beams, and then to the spots where the miners had been working. Here, by the light of our lamps, the pieces of green mineral could be clearly seen, and we had the pleasure of digging them out with a pick, and bringing them away as specimens. The price of malachite at the mine is six shillings a Russian pound, if in moderate-sized pieces; twenty shillings when the lumps are large, but only two shillings if they are small.

Besides these copper and magnetic iron mines, they have others of manganese iron ore, which contains 64 per cent. of binoxide of manganese, the peroxide being sold at the rate of about eighteen shillings per hundredweight. Specimens of these and other minerals of great interest to the geologist are exhibited in a museum not far from the works.

Among the remarkable things to be seen at these hives of industry were—a machine for drawing water by a cord from a copper-mine two miles off, a steam-hammer of seven tons weight, an iron furnace of 10,000 cubic feet dimensions, said to be the largest high furnace for *wood* in the world, and a machine for splitting their fuel wood, of which they burn annually 100,000 *sajens*—that is to say, a 325 feet cube, or, roughly speaking, a pile of logs twice as big as St. Paul's Cathedral.*

They make steel for Sheffield, and can do castings up to more than 30 tons in weight. Their iron is excelled in quality, I believe, only by that of Danne-

* What extent of land must be cleared to furnish such a quantity of fuel I know not, but the railways of Central Russia are said to consume yearly the timber off 90,000 acres of forest—an area, that is, about the size of Rutlandshire.

mora. They have 11 *zavods*, or "works," of which eight are connected with iron. But perhaps a better idea can be formed of their vastness by the mention of the number of persons employed, which amounts to 30,000. I heard also 40,000, and both numbers were from heads of departments; but probably the latter estimate includes carters, labourers, and perhaps even women. The Demidoffs pay annually, by way of rates and taxes—to the Commune, £5,000; the Church, £1,500; schools, £2,500; poor and aged, £3,000; together with other sums, amounting in all to about £20,000 a year. Wages, as compared with those in England, appeared low. Common workmen receive from 7½*d.* to 1*s.* a day, puddlers 3*s.*, and those in the welding furnace 4*s.*, whilst good rollers receive from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 6*s.* It should be observed, however, that they all have houses rent free, with the piece of land they formerly occupied as serfs.

Before the emancipation, the riches of the Demidoffs were counted in the phrase then usual in Russia as amounting to 56,000 souls.* A small church, built on the crest of a neighbouring hill, was pointed out as having been built by the serfs in memory of their freedom; and I was glad to hear from the director, Mr. Wohlstadt (by whom we were courteously entertained), that since the emancipation the men work better and better, knowing, I presume, when serfs, that idleness would be repaid with something not much worse than

* That is, men, or at least *males;* for I am told that male children are called "souls," but female children never. An English lady of my acquaintance informs me that she was told scores of times in Russia that she was not a *doash*, or soul, but only a woman; and when her son was born she was congratulated on being the mother of a soul!

a beating; whereas now they know they may be discharged.

We slept at the club; and in the morning, before leaving, visited the Demidoff hospital, upon which, and upon institutions of a similar kind, the proprietors spend nearly £4,000 a year. The dimensions of the rooms were such as to allow of three cubic *sajens*, or 1,200 cubic feet, of air for each of the patients, of whom there were 120 at the time of our visit. Many fractured and amputated limbs were seen dressed with gypsum, alcohol, and camphor; but the most extraordinary thing was a machine in the director's private room, in which he placed frozen human brains, and for scientific purposes cut them in very thin slices to photograph. The photographs are to be purchased in Paris.

On leaving Tagil we found the temperature much colder,* and our journey to Ekaterineburg was somewhat comfortless, from the fact that, anticipating no more cold weather, the officials had not brought in the train the apparatus for heating by steam. At Ekaterineburg I finished railway journeys, amounting to 2,670 miles; and as I was now to bid farewell to the horse of iron and travel by horses of flesh, it is only right to say that of the iron horses which took me across Europe

* Concerning the weather in crossing Europe, I may say that, from the Russian frontier to the capital, on the 2nd and 3rd of May, a fire was provided in the railway carriage, and on approaching Petersburg there was just a little snow left here and there in drifts. On the 4th the last of the ice was floating down the Neva. In less than a week it became positively hot in the middle of the day, and the trees opened their foliage rapidly. At Nijni Novgorod, on the 15th, the foliage was all but full. On the banks of the Kama the trees were covered with leaves, which the captain of the steamer said had come out within the previous five days; and on the 20th, when stopping for wood, some of the passengers found strawberry blossoms and violets. Fine weather then continued up to the 23rd.

the Russian on the whole was, I think, the best.* Our arrival at Ekaterineburg on Saturday evening was expected, and quarters were provided for me through the kindness of Messrs. Egerton Hubbard. Ekaterineburg is a handsome town of 30,000 inhabitants, and has many fine churches and other buildings. On Sunday I visited the hospital, and also an orphanage for 100 children, which has been built and is supported by local voluntary effort. This kind of institution is not yet very common among the Russians. It was regarded as a novelty, and was the only one of its precise kind that we saw in Asia.

Formerly there were several Englishmen living at Ekaterineburg, but a few only are now left, and so little practice do they have in the tongue of their fathers that some of them are rapidly forgetting it. Instances of this were met with further east, and another case in which English parents were allowing their children to grow up speaking only Russian, the result of which would be that the son who had been sent for his education to England would forget Russian, and, on coming back to Siberia, would not be able to speak to his sister who had not learnt English.

* The new first-class carriages running between Petersburg and Moscow have *fauteuils*, which form couches at night; and one I saw was so fixed on springs as to furnish almost the softness of a feather-bed. They have also writing tables, and are more luxurious than anything I have seen elsewhere in Europe, or even America. The lavatory arrangements "on board" in all three classes are exceedingly good. There only lacks the receptacle for iced water provided in Norway, and, perhaps, the dining cars run in America, to make Russian railway accommodation perfect. The guards, it is true, are somewhat pompous as compared with the English, and the speed of the trains is slower; but, on the other hand, the refreshments are very much better, and the prices more reasonable. There is time allowed, moreover, to eat them, though I am thinking more especially of the line between the capital and Moscow, which is naturally one of the best.

Ekaterineburg is a famous place for the cutting of precious stones, in which Siberia is rich. Near the river Argun are found the jacinth, the Siberian emerald, the onyx, and beautiful jaspers, of which there are at least a hundred varieties. Near Lake Baikal are found red garnets and lapis lazuli, and the Altai mountains furnish the opal. Several of these are also found near Ekaterineburg, together with the beryl, the topaz, the chrysolite, the aqua marine, the tourmaline, rhodonite, nephrite, ophite, selenite, and the recently-discovered Alexandrite, which exhibits two colors—crimson and green—the one by day and the other by night. The stone derives its name from the Emperor Alexander, whose colours it shows. These stones are cut in the Government workshops and in private houses, and may be purchased at moderate prices.

South of Ekaterineburg, towards Orenburg, are villages where may be purchased uncommon souvenirs in the shape of gentlemen's scarves and gloves, together with *kozy pookh*, or, as they are more commonly called, Orenburg shawls. They are made from the wool of the goats of the Kirghese, who allow the Cossacks to comb their flocks at the rate of from eightpence to a shilling per head. Twice a year the goats are washed and combed, first with a coarse and then with a fine comb. To make a good shawl employs a woman six months, and then, if it be a large one, it sells at first hand for about fifty shillings; but very much higher prices are asked in Petersburg.

We stayed three days at Ekaterineburg to lay in provisions and gather our forces for proceeding by horses. The greater part of my heavy luggage had

been dispatched by slow train to Ekaterineburg fully a month before me, but it did not reach its destination till the day after my arrival. The agent said it might have been waiting on the road for the chance of other goods to make up a load. A tarantass had been very kindly placed at my disposal by Mr. Oswald Cattley, whose name, some time since, was before the public in connection with the opening up of a new trade on the Obi; and in this we packed ourselves and some of our personal baggage, placing the rest with several boxes in a second conveyance, and leaving still a third load of boxes to be forwarded as luggage. In this fashion, after receiving all sorts of kindness and hospitality from our English friends, we started on Tuesday evening, May 27th, for Tiumen, a distance of 204 miles, which was accomplished in 43 continuous hours.

Tiumen is situated on the Tura, and has a population of from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. Commercially speaking, it is the most important town in Western Siberia, and through it pass the water carriage of the Obi, as well as the caravans coming from China and the East. Here we found an English engineering firm, conducted by Messrs. Wardropper, who were particularly kind to us. To Tiumen all the exiles are brought from Europe, and from thence are distributed over Siberia. I needed not, therefore, the eye of a general to see that, for my purpose of distributing books over the land, this was the key to a very important position. It was desirable, therefore, that I should see some of the magnates of the town who were members of the prison committee, and, if possible, secure their sympathy and co-operation.

Accordingly I was taken to visit the Mayor, who

was building a large commercial school for the benefit of the town, at a cost of more than £20,000, which, when finished, was to be handed over to the Government. He is a merchant who has made his way to the front, and now entertains the Governor-General when he passes through, though otherwise he lives quietly. His house, when we called, was in preparation for one of those viceregal receptions, and, knowing that his worship was rich, I busied myself, during the Russian conversation, in scanning what I supposed might be considered appropriate study furniture for a wealthy Siberian. 'The Mayor, I had heard, was fond of good horses, which accounted for the winner-of-the-Derby-like engravings hanging on the wall, the whole of which might have been purchased, I judged, in London for twenty shillings. The room, as is the custom of the country, was not carpeted, and the furniture consisted of a bare, polished, wooden bench, bored with holes, in patterns after the fashion of American street cars. The chairs were of wood, similarly ornamented. The table had about it some fretwork, and on it various writing materials, and accompaniments more or less artistic. I mentally appraised the whole as being worth about £20, and admired the simplicity of a man who could be content with a study thus furnished, whilst he was giving away a thousand times its value. My cogitations served to recall what had struck me in Norway and Sweden, when observing how much simpler, as regards furniture, people are content to live in these northern countries than in England, though I did not discern that they were less happy than we are. After leaving the house, I broached the subject approvingly to my friend who was with me,

upon which I found that I had undervalued the furniture, and that it was of American manufacture, and the first of the kind imported into the town.

I was taken also to call upon a prominent member of the prison committee, Mr. Ignatoff, of the firm of Kourbatoff and Ignatoff. They have steamers on the Kama and Obi, and hold the Government contract for the transport in barges of exiles. He was much interested in my scheme of visiting prisons, and was so pleased with my account of the Howard Association in London, of which I said I was a member, and which had for its object the prevention of crime and promoting the best methods for the treatment and reformation of prisoners, that he spoke of asking to be allowed at once to join the Association.* He kindly undertook to do all he could to further the distribution of the books I engaged to send to him; and I was glad to have called, not only for the information obtained, but for the interest excited, though I was hardly prepared for the very practical and generous form which this interest took, which will be hereafter alluded to.

We called afterwards on the Ispravnik, or chief

* He had made private notes concerning the exiles, of which it appeared that, during the last ten years, from 9,500 to 10,500 yearly had passed through his hands. Of these there were adults about 9,000; under 15, 1,500; and under 2 years of age, 150. About 3,000, he thought, could read. The professors of various religious beliefs prevailed, he said in decreasing numbers, in the following order: (1) Orthodox Russian, (2) Mohammedan, (3) Jewish, (4) Roman Catholic, (5) Protestant. Drunkenness, he believed, was directly or indirectly the cause of the crimes of half of the whole number sent to Siberia, and these were found to be the worst prisoners and the most troublesome. He looked forward, therefore, with pleasure to the expected and now long-waited-for prison reforms, one of which, it was said, would be the sending no more exiles to the western part of Siberia.

man of the district, and presented my letter, with the view of visiting the prisons. I heard that in his district there were 24 schools, and, having made arrangements for providing them with tracts, I went to see the prison. From statistics given me for the previous year, it appeared that a total of 20,711 prisoners passed through the hands of the authorities in 1878.* This opens up the whole subject of prisons and exiles, which is to form a leading feature of these pages, and therefore I think it will be better to devote separate chapters to both, in which general ideas can be given. This will save repetition, and it will then be easy to illustrate general principles by particular incidents as we meet them from time to time in travelling and visiting prisons from the Urals to the Pacific.

* One-fourth of these (4,995) were women, and 215 were *local* offenders, of whom 10 were women and 3 were minors. In the course of the year were located in the Town Prison 157 men and 5 women; in the Police Prison 4 men, and in the Central Prison for exiles 15,111 men and 4,985 women.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXILES.

Reasons for and history of deportation to Siberia.—Number of exiles.—Their education.—Crimes.—Sentences.—Loss of rights.—Privileges.—Proportion of hard-labour convicts.—Where located.—Release.—Escapes.—Causes and methods of flight.—Transport.—A convoy of exiles.—Moscow charity.—Conveyance to Perm and Tiumen.—Their distribution.—Order of march.—Sea-borne exiles.—Mistakes of English newspapers.—Conveyance of political exiles.

IN dealing with criminals, the Russian Government has to act as best it can for the good of the community in general. If, in particular cases, it seems likely that the criminal may be reformed, he is sent to one of the prisons or houses of correction at home; but if, on the other hand, the crime of the malefactor demands a severe punishment, and, after repeated correction, he seems to be incorrigible, then he is banished to Siberia, the people being thus rid of a corrupting member of society, whilst another unit is sent to assist in developing the resources of a large territory of the Russian empire, which has great need of population. This, I presume, is the theory, or part of it, of the deportation of prisoners to distant parts of the empire.*

* According to M. Reclus, the first decree of banishment fell upon the insurrectionists of Uglitch, in 1591, in the days of the Tsar Boris Godunof, and for a century afterwards Siberia received scarcely any exiles but State prisoners. At the end of the seventeenth century, however, some of the

The number of ordinary exiles sent to Siberia for several years past has been from 17,000 to 20,000 per annum; but this includes wives and children who choose to accompany the prisoners. Of these nearly 8,000, on their arrival in Siberia, are set free to get their own living; about 3,000 of them being sent to Eastern and 5,000 to Western Siberia. The exiles come from all parts of Russia in Europe, and include about 300 a year from Finland. In 1879 there were 898 sent from Poland. Some idea may be formed of the education of the exiles from the fact that on the day we visited Tiumen prison there were, out of 470 prisoners, 42 who could read and write well, 32 who could do so a little, and 12 who could sign their names. At Tiumen, however, we heard from one who had to do with a great many exiles, and who had several statistics about them, that one-third of those with whom he had been brought into contact could read. Again, in the district of Kansk, in Eastern Siberia, in 1877, of 226 criminals, only two were marked as "well-educated," whilst in 1878, of 182 prisoners, none stood

vanquished Little Russians of the Ukraine were deported thither; and they were followed by the religious dissenters—the first accompanied by their families. The Streltzi were banished by Peter the Great to garrisons in the most distant parts of the empire; and after the reign of Peter, the intrigues of the palace were the cause of exile to some of the Court celebrities, such as Menchikoff, Dolgoruki, Biron, Munich, Tolstoï, and others, some of whom, however, were brought back when their friends came into favour. In 1758 began the deportation of Poles to Siberia, but their banishment in large numbers dates from the reign of Catherine II., with the confederates of Bar, and then with the companions of Kosciuzko. Nine hundred Poles, having served under Napoleon, were exiled to Siberia, and large numbers of the insurrectionists of 1830 followed. The exiles whose names awaken perhaps the most sympathy among the Russians were the Decembrists of 1826, who endeavoured to deprive the Emperor Nicholas of his throne; but of these, and political prisoners generally, I shall treat hereafter in a separate chapter.

high enough, intellectually, to be thus designated. The figures from Kansk are not quite to the point in speaking of European Russia, but they help, with others, to give an approximate idea, not only of the education, but also of the social rank of the Siberian criminals. Again, for statistical purposes, the Russians are sometimes marked off into five classes, thus: nobles, merchants, ecclesiastics, citizens, and peasants; and in prison the higher grades receive better allowance, and are not mixed with the peasant prisoners, but have rooms apart. In going through the principal prisons of Siberia, however, we found the number of rooms thus occupied decidedly small; so that this observation, taken with the educational state of the prisoners, would seem to confirm what I was told by one prison official, that probably not more than 3 or 4 per cent. of the exiles are from the upper classes.

As to the crimes of the exiles, they are not all political, nor even chiefly so. A large proportion—4,000 out of 18,000, or say 20 per cent.—of them are charged with no one particular offence, except that they have rendered themselves obnoxious to the community among which they lived. If a man in Russia be incorrigibly bad, and will not pay his taxes nor support his wife and family, but leaves these things to be done by his neighbours, his commune—which may consist of one or more villages—meet in their *mir*, or village parliament, vote the man a nuisance, and adjudge that he be sent, at their expense, to Siberia. This judgment is submitted to higher authorities, and, unless just cause be shown to the contrary, is confirmed. The man is then taken to Siberia, not to be imprisoned, but to get his living as a colonist.

Those sent thus by the villages, I was told, are chiefly drunkards. We saw a whole wardful of them at Tiumen, dressed in private clothes, and not in prison garb; and a second ward, of a similar mixed multitude, consisting of men, women, and children. The perpetrators of political crimes, as those of the "black Nihilists," are, when caught, usually accommodated with free lodgings in Siberia; and so with revolutionary offenders, who make insurrection in Poland, Circassia, or elsewhere. Of offenders such as these I must speak hereafter. Formerly religious dissenters were largely deported, but this has not been done since the proclamation of what may, in a fashion, be called religious liberty, unless in the case of one or two—more especially one sect—whose practices no enlightened Government could tolerate, and which are so extraordinary that, if they obtained universal acceptance, there would be no further increase of population, and the human race would become extinct. The fact is that the great mass of exiles are nothing more nor less than ordinary criminals, such as may be found in any of the prisons of Europe.*

* There are upwards of thirty crimes for the commission of one or more of which a man may be sent to Siberia. In fact, I have been told that all the crimes of the country are reduced to these thirty-three heads, viz.: insubordination to authorities; stealing or losing official documents; escape, or abetting the escape, of prisoners; embezzlement of Government property; forgery while in Government employ; blasphemy; heresy and dissent; sacrilege; sheltering runaways; forging coin or paper money; without passport, or passport with term not renewed; vagrancy; bad conduct and petty crimes; murder, and suspicion thereof; attempted suicide; wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm; rape and seduction; insult; attacking with intent to wound; holding property falsely; practices of the "Scoptsi"; arson; robbery and burglary; thieving and roguery; horse-stealing; dishonesty and false actions; debt; dishonouring the name of the Emperor; assuming false names or titles; bestiality; usury and extortion; eluding military service; smuggling and illicit distilling.

The sentences of the exiles vary widely according as they are condemned to one or the other of two classes, namely: those who lose all their rights, and those who lose only partial or political rights, which deprivations may be thus explained :—

Those who lose all their rights are not in an enviable position. These are some of the things they lose :—If a man have a title or official rank, he is degraded. An exile's marriage rights are broken, so that his wife is free to marry another. Neither his word nor his bond is of any value. He cannot sign a legal document or serve any office, either municipal or imperial. He can hold no property, nor do anything legal in his own name. In prison he must wear convict's clothes, and have his head half shaved ; and, in the case of a woman, she cannot marry after her release from prison till by good conduct she has placed herself in a certain category; and, whether man or woman, they may, for new crimes, if the authorities see fit, after they have served their time in prison, and are living as colonists, be sent back again. They may be thrashed with rods and with the "*plète*," and, even should they be murdered, probably little trouble would be taken to find the murderer. In fact, as the words imply, they lose all their rights, though I believe they can appeal to the law in case of being grossly wronged.

I have said that an exile's marriage rights are broken, and I was told that it is the same with convicts in America. Were it not so, it might be very hard upon a young wife whose husband, for instance, had committed murder, and who, for her husband's crime and banishment, should be compelled to remain single for the rest of her life. A Russian wife with

her children, however, may accompany the husband if she chooses; in which case they go with the exile and receive from the Government prison food and accommodation. If, on the other hand, a husband wishes to accompany a convict wife, he travels at his own cost. To the honour of the Russian women be it said that the proportion of men accompanied by their wives and families is one in every six. The proportion of women accompanied by their husbands is, I am told, not exactly known, though it is very much less.

Those who suffer the loss of particular rights lose certain of their privileges (but not family or property rights), and are settled in Siberia, to get their living in any way they are able. They may, however, in some cases, have first to serve for a period in prison; or, again, they may be allowed to live in their own houses and give a portion of their time to Government work.

Commonly, they are condemned first to serve a certain time in confinement, with or without labour. If they behave well they are, after a while, and in some cases, allowed to live outside the prison with their families, if they have any, but still to do their allotted work, until the period arrives for them to be liberated and located like colonists. Some of the women who are condemned to the far east have the good fortune to be taken as domestic servants by officers, and even favoured civilians, who, in a new country where ordinary servants are not to be had, are allowed for this purpose to take the prisoners, subject to inspection, of course. Lastly, some exiles, though comparatively few, I believe, are condemned to prison or to prison and labour, for life.*

* Some idea may be formed of the proportion of the banished who

The localities to which the exiles are sent vary according to their crimes. Speaking generally, those deprived of partial rights are sent to Western, and those deprived of all their rights to Eastern, Siberia. On this point I have no official statistics, but a legal officer gave me these particulars concerning the location of convicts. Murderers are sent to Kara. My finding 800 there would seem to confirm this, only that their presence was manifest in so many of the other prisons also. Political prisoners go to Kara, to the Trans-Baikal district, and (as I heard from other sources) to the Yakutsk government; also to this latter province are sent those who commit fresh crimes in Siberia. Vagrants or vagabonds are dispatched to the far east, to the government of the Sea Coast and Sakhalin. On the other hand, Western Siberia would seem to be reserved for minor offenders, and those deprived of certain particular rights only. It should be observed, however, that exiles, wherever they may be, are under police inspection, are furnished with papers

are condemned to hard labour by observing that, of 17,867 exiles passing eastwards through Tiumen prison in 1878 (the year before my visit), 2,252, or one-seventh, were transported for hard labour, and the remainder for "residence for life, or for certain terms in East and West Siberia." I was told likewise by Mr. Ignatoff, at Tiumen, that about 2,500 hard-labour convicts passed yearly through his hands, and that they spent the first part of their time at Tobolsk. It may be further noticed from my statistics, that during the same year which saw the above number of exiles going eastwards, there passed through the same prison 2,629 persons returning westwards "to their respective homes in Russia;" which expression I do not understand, since I am informed from an official source that the number of persons returning after temporary exile is very small. The law permits those only to go back who are banished by the communes (and then not without their permission), and those who are deprived of *particular* rights. Four hundred and sixty-two of those condemned to "hard labour," and 3,488 of those going into "residence," are marked as *minors*,—that is to say, children of exiles, and *offenders* under twenty-one years of age; of which last, I am told, the annual total sent to Siberia does not exceed 300.

which they have to show at intervals, and which tie them to a certain place, whence they can move to a distance only by permission. When at large, and in some cases when in prison, the exiles may correspond with their friends through the post; but the letters must of course be read by the authorities. The hardest part of the lot of those who lose all their rights seems to be that they cannot look forward to the hope of returning. Not that a release is *never* granted even to these; for I am told that political offenders are sometimes seen hurried out of, as fast as they are hurried into, exile. The late Emperor, too, when he came to the throne, began his reign by an act of clemency on a larger scale, and allowed certain exiles whom his father had banished to return. Again, I have heard of a Polish exile in good circumstances who was fortunate enough to win the love of an English young lady connected (by name at all events) with one of the ducal families of Great Britain, through which it is said the ear was gained of a member first of the English royal family, then of the imperial family of Russia, and finally of the Emperor himself.* I have met with another case of a released exile who was liberated under curious circumstances. He gave me his story thus:—When Alexander II. visited Paris in the time of Napoleon III.,

* I have heard parts of this story in various places—in Hampshire, in Devon, in Siberia, and on the coast of the Pacific—of the heroic conduct of a Scotch Professor, who gallantly escorted this young lady to her lover in Siberia, sat by her side for 3,000 miles, watched over her, saw her married, and then, returning, gave no rest to friends or officials till he had obtained the Pole's release. The incidents would doubtless suffice for a three-volumed novel, which, however, I will not begin, as I know only one of the parties concerned, and him only by correspondence, and I have not had the recital from his own lips.

the Tsar asked the Emperor if there were anything he could do for him. Upon which the Emperor replied: "You have a Frenchman who, in young and silly days, joined the Polish insurrection. He was made prisoner, and is now in Siberia. Will you do me the favour to release him?" The request was granted, a messenger despatched, the happy prisoner in forty-five days and nights drove back from the mines to Moscow, not with a couple of horses merely, but troika fashion, between a couple of gendarmes, and received his pardon. But such cases, of course, are rare.

It is well known that many of the exiles escape—some from the prisons, and others from the districts where they are living free. A Russian authoress, "O. K.," in "Russia and England from 1876 to 1880," says that in January 1876, out of 51,122 exiles supposed to be in Tobolsk, only 34,293 could be found, which figures an Englishman living in the Tobolsk government (speaking offhand) told me he should doubt, though he thought "O. K.'s" statement *might* be right regarding the government of Tomsk, in which the same authoress states that 5,000 were missing out of 30,000. For my own figures I am indebted to a prison official very high in position, who told me that nearly 700 get away yearly, and in 1876 as many as 952 escaped the control of the police. Thus the mere feat of running away does not seem to be difficult; but this does not imply that it is equally easy to get away from the country. A few roubles slipped into the hands of a Cossack or petty officer have a wonderful effect in blinding his eyes. Again, an escape is sometimes made from the gold-mines thus:—The convicts work in gangs, and one lies in a

ditch for the others to cover him with branches and rubbish. The numbers are called on leaving off work, and one is missing. Search proves fruitless, and, after all have left the mine, the man rises from his temporary grave and makes for the woods. The great difficulty is not to get away, but to keep away. The country is so vast that they cannot travel far before the approach of winter, and then, if they have escaped in company, they have the choice of returning to prison food or eating one another. They have, moreover, another difficulty with the natives. In the Trans-Baikal district, the Buriats are said to hunt down escaped convicts, and shoot them like vermin; which is probably explained by what was told me of the Gilyaks on the Lower Amur, that they receive three roubles a-head for every escaped convict they bring to the police, whether dead or alive. The natives argue thus: "If you shoot a squirrel, you get only his skin; whereas, if you shoot a *varnak*" (which is the nickname they give to convicts), "you get his skin and his clothing too." Thus it is very difficult for them to get out of the country.

There are several reasons, however, which conduce to their running away. A long-term prisoner, for instance, condemned to twenty years' labour, makes his escape from a penal colony, wanders about the country during the summer months, and, on the approach of winter, commits a crime and is caught. He is asked for his name, to which he replies that it is *Ivan Nepomnoostchi*—that is, "John Know-nothing." He is asked where he comes from. He replies that he entirely forgets. What has been his occupation? His memory fails him. He is asked for his papers. He

says that he has none, or perhaps trumps up a story that he has lost them—and so on. Accordingly he is tried, and is sentenced, say to five years' hard labour, for which he inwardly thanks the Court, and goes off, it may be, to a new prison, having effected a saving of the sorrows of eighteen years. Should he not play his game aright, however, and should he be detected, then his past service goes for nothing; he is most likely flogged, and sent back to a harder berth than he had before. Some run away under the influence of drink, and discover their mistake too late. Again, other reasons which may be supposed to conduce to flight are—the fear of punishment for new faults committed, the desire to get back to social and family ties in Europe, or, in the case of those twice imprisoned, to ties which they have formed whilst settled in Siberia.

I am disposed to think that the severance of family and social ties is with many the really hard pinch of Siberian exile. One lady, who had a convict for her nurse, told me that she gave her her own clothes, paid her £1 a month, provided her a home in the best house in the province, to say nothing of sundry perquisites, and yet she sometimes found her, when alone, in tears; and, on asking what was the matter, the answer was—"Oh, if I only knew something of my friends in Russia!" She had not learnt to write, her friends were in the same position, and the difficulty of procuring an amanuensis, together with uncertainty as to address, made communication almost impossible; and so she said she could not tell whether her friends were dead or alive, or what might be their fate. I recollect, too, in a prison at Uleaborg, in Finland, finding a woman who had escaped from exile, of whom I asked how she

liked Siberia; to which she replied that as regards the country she had nothing to complain of; but, she pathetically added, "I did *so* want to see my mother!" And to do this she had taken flight, during three years had traversed more than 2,000 miles, had reached her old home, and was then retaken!

But nothing has yet been said of the transport of the exiles. Of old they had to walk all the way, and the journey and stoppages occupied a long time. The woman at Uleaborg said she was eight months going from Petersburg to Tobolsk. In this matter, however, as in many others, the lot of the banished was much mitigated during the reign of the late Emperor, especially after 1867. The introduction of railways and river steamboats greatly facilitated this. Accordingly, those in Russia who are condemned to Siberia are now first gathered to a central prison in Moscow, where they may be seen entering the city in droves. A very affecting sight was the first of these droves I saw in 1874. The van consisted of soldiers with fixed bayonets. Behind them marched the worst of the men prisoners, with chains on their ankles, the clanking of which as they moved was most unmusical. Then followed men without fetters, but chained by the hand to what looked like a long iron rod; and next after them the women convicts; and then the most touching part of the whole—women, not convicts, but wives who had elected to be banished with their husbands. Then there were wagons containing children, the old and infirm, baggage, etc., the rear being brought up by armed soldiers. As the prisoners moved along the street, passengers stepped from the pavement to give them presents. To this the guards who walked at the

side made no objection, and in this way, in some of the towns, the prisoners gather, or used to gather, a considerable sum of money; for the woman at Uleaborg said that the money given to her drove of 156 prisoners, during their three days' stay in Moscow, amounted to about 30*s.* each.* More recently, however, a Pole, who began his walking in 1871, farther east, at Perm, told me his receipts from the wayside charity of the people were insignificant.

Being gathered then at Moscow, the prisoners are sent off in droves of about 700 each by rail to Nijni Novgorod. This commences in spring, as soon as the river navigation opens, and two or three parties go off each week. They began, the year of my visit, on May 8th. On reaching Nijni Novgorod they are placed in a large barge built for the purpose, which carries from 600 to 800, and is tugged by steamer to Perm.

Hence they are taken twice a week by rail to Ekaterineburg; 350 on Wednesday, and 500 on Saturday. Their walking, however, does not yet begin; for the 200 miles remaining to Tiumen is got over by conveyances, each of which, drawn by three horses, carries about six prisoners; and thus they arrive at the first prison in Siberia proper.

Now begins their distribution. Those who are con-

* M. Andreoli, in the story of his exile, remarks that the Moscow merchants had established a considerable fund for dividing among prisoners going to Siberia, and that when a party arrived, the director of the fund was at once informed. He then divided equally among them the means at his disposal, which was never less than 14*s.* or 16*s.*, and sometimes as much as 30*s.* or 32*s.* to each person. Men, women, and children shared alike, so that a man with a family got substantial help; but this fund, I am told, no longer exists. Both M. Andreoli and Baron Rosen speak of the kindness of the Siberian peasants to exiles on their journey.

demned to Western Siberia are assigned to particular towns or villages, whither they are sent by water, if possible, or, if not, on foot. Those, however, who are condemned to Eastern Siberia are placed in another barge, and taken on the Tura, Tobol, Irtish, Obi, and the Tom, to Tomsk, whence their walking eastward begins. When not hindered by accidental causes, they usually rest one day and walk two, marching sometimes twenty miles or more a day. Temporary prisons called *étapes* are erected along the road to receive them for the night, and in the towns are larger buildings called *perisylnie* prisons, in which they may rest, if necessary, a longer time, and where there are hospitals, medical attendants, etc. Thus they go on day after day, week after week, month after month, to their destined place or prison, to Irkutsk, to Yakutsk, to Chita, or, if perchance they are destined to Sakhalin, they continue to Stretinsk on the Shilka, thence by steam on the river Amur to Nikolaefsk, and so by ship to the island. Two years since, however, the Russian Government adopted a new and better plan with prisoners intended for Sakhalin, and, instead of sending them across Asia, shipped them from Odessa, *viâ* the Suez Canal, to the Pacific direct. A large merchant steamer, the *Nijni Novgorod*, was employed for the purpose, sailing under the Government flag, which made the passage in about two months, the prisoners arriving in excellent health, and without one death on the passage.

I mention this fact the more readily as I heard it in the Admiral's house at Vladivostock, where the ship arrived a week or two before I did, and where it was said that one of the Japanese newspapers had copied

from an English paper to the effect that half the prisoners had died on the passage, and that the rest were in a terribly sick condition. As an Englishman I was called to account for this, and I found that the minds of some of my Russian friends were very sore with the editors of English newspapers, by reason of alleged misrepresentations received at their hands. They complained, moreover, that whereas some of the newspapers were ready enough to publish against the Russians all they knew that was bad, they were slow to acknowledge the good, and were not always ready to recall what had been said, even when proved to have been false. Not having the facts before me, I could only put in a plea regarding the desire of English journals to be first in the field with news, and the consequent rapid manner in which editorial work has to be done. Knowing something of an editor's difficulties, I felt justified in expressing the hope that there had been no intentional departure from fairness, uprightness, and integrity. I am not sure, however, that I should have been ready with an answer had I known how the case really stood.*

* On reaching England I was referred to what had appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, first, on June 2nd, under the heading, "Reign of Terror in Russia," where it was stated that "a large number of convicts are about to be despatched to Sakhalin from Odessa, the service which provides for the ordinary transportation of criminals to Siberia being already overtaxed." Again, on July 28th, under the same heading appeared half a column of large print, speaking of "the appalling evidence of Russian barbarity" which their "own correspondent" had obtained. The correspondent informant visited the ship, and observed to the officer in command that the prisoners so badly provided for would never survive the passage, to which the Russian officer was said to have replied, "Well, so much the better for all parties if they do not," and so on. On the next day, under the heading "Russian Barbarities," it appeared that Mr. Joseph Cowen asked in Parliament whether the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had received information that 700 persons, mostly men

I have thus described the transport of ordinary exiles to Siberia. There is another category of prisoners—arch-heretics in political or revolutionary affairs, Nihilists, etc., of whom the authorities wish to take special care, who are not sent with the common herd, but are individually placed between two gendarmes, and sent off to travel alone direct to their destination. I am of opinion that the popular notion as to their numbers is exaggerated, and that they are much fewer than is commonly supposed. I shall offer my reasons for thinking thus later on. These persons, while travelling, are never allowed, under any pretence, to be out of sight of their keepers, who are charged to allow no one to speak to them. This, however, is not always carried out to the letter; for a friend of mine, coming one day to a swollen river in Siberia, near Omsk, where a gendarme was also waiting with a young lady prisoner of seventeen, was allowed to speak to her, and she told him that since she left Petersburg,

and women of education, had been packed in the hold of a small ship —(the *Daily Telegraph* had described it the same day as a man-of-war of 4,000 tons)—that 250 had died on board, and 150 were landed in a dying state, etc. Most of this appeared in large print, and attention was called thereto. But by August 5th a change had come over the scene, and all or nearly all the foregoing was found to be untrue; and then, in their *smallest* print, simply headed "Reuter's Telegram," the *Daily Telegraph* informed its readers in six lines that "the *Novoe Vremya* of August 4th states that the steamer *Nijni Novgorod* arrived at Nagasaki on Friday last, and that the convicts were well in health." Now here would appear to have been ample room for, if not an apology, yet an expression of regret that the Russians had been so very much misrepresented; but, if such appeared, it has escaped me. On August 9th, the Russian journals are alluded to as joining in a chorus of indignation against Messrs. Cowen and Mundella for their motion in Parliament, but nothing is recalled of what had been said. I know not how the foregoing extracts may strike the reader, but the perusal of them did not cause me to plume myself on the score of English fairness and our supposed love of justice.

a distance of 1,700 miles, she had not once had a gendarme out of her presence. When there are several prisoners of this character travelling in a manner together, they are kept separate, and are not allowed to speak to each other. But even this cannot always be enforced; for not long before my arrival at Tiumen a batch of about ten such persons had passed. On arriving at Ekaterineburg, a separate carriage was taken for each; but when they came at Tiumen to the riverside, standing and waiting for the steamer, they were able to snatch a few moments for conversing together. I know of another instance, in which a young woman had been suspected of a political offence, and been warned by the authorities to desist; but, not profiting by the warning, she was arrested, sent off with a gendarme, and on her way met a gentleman whom she asked to convey a letter to her friends. This of course was against the gendarme's orders, but, on being assured that the letter should be only of a private nature, and three roubles being put into his hand, he allowed it to be written and taken. This was in European Russia. Further east they become still more lax.

There is yet a third case, in which exiles are permitted to journey by themselves like ordinary travellers. We met a lady who was forced to quit Petersburg at twenty-four hours' notice; but owing to her position, or through interest, she was allowed to travel alone; and in this manner, by reason of illness on the way, during which her money was stolen, she was a twelvemonth reaching her location in Eastern Siberia. This, however, was the only case we met with of an exile travelling privately, and I presume similar cases are very

exceptional. Whilst the exiles are on the march, and, in certain cases, whilst they are living like colonists, they receive clothing and an allowance for food, either in money or in kind; but this subject will be best treated under the description of prisons, to which subsequent chapters will be devoted.

CHAPTER V.

FROM TIUMEN TO TOBOLSK.

General remarks on Siberia.—Limits.—Area.—Temperature.—Divisions.—Roads.—Ethnography.—Language.—Posting to Tobolsk.—Floods.—Spring roads.—Villages of Tatars.—Their history.—Characteristics.—Costumes.—Occupation.—Worship.—Language.

BETWEEN Ekaterineburg and Tiumen, as already intimated, the traveller passes into Siberia,—concerning which country it may be well here to make some general observations, with a view to the better understanding of future chapters. The western boundary of this immense region runs from the Arctic Ocean along the chain of the Northern Urals to a point in about the same latitude as Lake Onega; then, leaving the mountains a little to the left, it comes down in a tolerably straight line to a point midway between the Sea of Aral and Lake Balkash; thence it turns eastward to and along the northern shore of the lake, and, going further east, joins the Altai Mountains. All Russia lying to the west and south of this line is either in Europe or in Asia; all lying to the east of it is Siberia, the length and breadth of which are the same as of Russia in Asia; whilst its area, as given in recent Russian statistics, is 4,750,000 square miles, or more than three thousand millions of acres (3,185,510,900), of which nearly one-fifth is arable.

The river Yenesei (roughly speaking) divides the country into east and west, the surface of the western portion being almost entirely flat, whilst the eastern portion, especially towards the Pacific, is mountainous. Siberia extends over nearly 40 degrees of latitude, and in climate ranges from arctic to semi-tropical. In passing through the country from west to east, from the end of May to the beginning of October, between the 50th and 57th parallels, we found the temperature much the same as during the same period in England. When steaming on the Obi, at the beginning of June, on the 62nd parallel, my minimum thermometer fell during the night as low as 35° Fahrenheit, but rose by 9 o'clock to 75°. English winter clothing, therefore, by day was not too warm. Again, at Vladivostock, lying on the 43rd parallel, the heat towards the end of September was not too great for clothing suited to an English summer. All through the journey, however, when sleeping in the tarantass, it was sufficiently cold in the early morning, whatever might be the heat of the day, to make an ulster coat acceptable.

The political divisions of the country are two viceroyalties, called respectively Western and Eastern Siberia. Each of these is divided into "governments" and "oblasts."*

* I am not clearly informed as to the exact difference between a government and an oblast, but I am under the impression that an oblast (which means a "province") is a territory often newly acquired and under martial law, whereas, in a "government," things have settled down, and the civil and military organizations are under separate control. The word "oblasts" is sometimes translated "territories"; their relation to "governments" being similar to the relation between "Territories" and "States" in America. The oblasts in Siberia are Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk in the west, and Yakutsk and the Sea Coast in the east; but, to avoid confusion, we will speak of them all as governments or provinces. Each province has its capital, which ranks as a "government" town, and each *uyezd* has like-

The means of communication in Siberia are more ample than a foreigner might suppose. There are, indeed, no railways; but when the line, now in course of construction, from Ekaterineburg to Tiumen is finished, the English traveller will be able to go by steam from Charing Cross to Tomsk, a distance of 5,000 miles, and further east than Ceylon. As it is now, when Tiumen is reached, river communication becomes possible with each of the four capitals of Western Siberia. Again, the Amur presents a water passage inland from the Pacific, by which Nikolaefsk, Blagovestchensk, and almost Chita, may be reached; and now that Captain Wiggins has led the way through the Kara Gates, and Professor Nordenskjold has followed on to Behring's Strait, Russia may congratulate herself on having for the commerce of Siberia three additional outlets—the Obi, the Yenesei, and the Lena—to both Europe and Japan.

Again, there is the communication by roads, which is the more important on account of the many months the rivers are frozen over. There are two post roads by which Siberia is entered from the west; one through Orenburg, which is little used, and the other through Ekaterineburg to Tiumen. There is also a third road,

wise its principal town. Each province is subdivided into districts, called *uyezds; uyezds* into *vollosts;* and *vollosts* into villages, called *selo,* if with a church, or *derevnia* if without. In the villages the chief man is called a *starosta;* in the vollosts a *zasidatil.* Over each uyezd commonly presides an ispravnik; over each province a governor; and over each vice-royalty a governor-general. Western Siberia is divided into four provinces, namely: Tobolsk, Tomsk, and Semipolatinsk, each of which has a capital, bearing the name of the province; and Akmolinsk, which has Omsk for its capital. Eastern Siberia is divided into six provinces: Irkutsk and Yakutsk, with capitals of the same names; and Yeneseisk, Trans-Baikal, Amur, and Sea Coast (or Maritime), with capitals named Krasnoiarsk, Chita, Blagovestchensk, and Nikolaefsk.

not much used, which crosses the Urals further north, and connects *Veliki Ustiug*, on the Northern Dwina, with Irbit. The high road to China leaves Tiumen in an easterly direction to Omsk, where the routes from Orenburg, Semipolatinsk, and Central Asia converge. The main road goes east to Tomsk, where it is joined by roads on the north from Narym, and on the south from Barnaul; it then continues eastward to Krasnoiarsk, where it is joined by roads, on the north from Yeneseisk, and on the south from Minusinsk. After this it takes a south-easterly direction to Irkutsk, whence there go two ways—one to the north-east, to Yakutsk, and so on to Kamchatka; the other, and principal one, to the south-east and round the base of Lake Baikal to Verchne Udinsk. Here it divides into two, that to the right leading to Kiakhta and China; that to the left running east, through Chita to Stretinsk. Thence the traveller proceeds on the Shilka and Amur—by boat in summer, and on the ice in winter—past Blagovestchensk to Khabarovka, whence, to the left, he continues on the Amur to Nikolaefsk, or he turns to the right up the Ussuri and the Sungacha to Vladivostock. Along all these roads there is postal and, except towards Yakutsk, telegraphic communication also.

An ethnographical map of Siberia, coloured according to the area which is occupied by its various nationalities, reveals the fact that only a very small portion of the country is inhabited by Russians.* In fact, a narrow strip of country suffices to show their *habitat*, if drawn

* The total population, Russian and aboriginal, according to the *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, August 7th, 1881, quoting the most recent statistics, numbers 1,388,000 souls; but I am not sure whether "souls" may not mean *males* only, as it sometimes does in Russia. They are divided among

on either side of the great land and water highways, and somewhat widened in the mining districts of the Yeneseisk and Tomsk governments; and as the aborigines do not generally follow agriculture, it will be inferred that those parts of the land which are under cultivation lie within this narrow strip. The same observation will also indicate that, whilst the language of the towns and the highways is Russian, a knowledge of other tongues is needed for extensive intercourse with the natives.

Having made these general remarks concerning Siberia, we proceed on our journey from Tiumen to Tobolsk, *en route* for Tomsk, which is best reached in summer by river, steaming for 1,800 miles, the post road from Tiumen to Tomsk passing through Omsk, or by a somewhat nearer way, leaving Omsk to the south, and then crossing the Barabinsky steppe.

We arrived at Tiumen on Thursday, the 29th May, bringing with us two loads of luggage, and leaving the rest to follow by "goods'" transport. There was steam communication between Tiumen and Tobolsk twice a week, the passage occupying a day and a half; but the steamer that went on to Tomsk was to leave on the following Monday, by which time the remaining luggage could not arrive. It became, therefore, a question whether we should wait for it or go before, in the hope that, whilst we were making *détours*, our books might overtake us. My Finnish friend, Miss Alba Hellman, had sent me some pamphlets for distribution amongst a colony of Finns and others from the Baltic provinces,

the provinces as follows: Tobolsk, 463,000; Tomsk, 324,000; Irkutsk, 165,000; Yeneseisk, 164,000; Trans-Baikal, 141,000; Amur, 3,000; Sea Coast, 13,000; and Yakutsk, 112,000. This says nothing of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk

numbering about 1,800, and located at Ruschkova, not far from the city of Omsk. We at first thought, therefore, to make this *détour*, and then, instead of returning to Tiumen, to go "across country" to Tobolsk, and thus see the prisons, and wait for the next steamer but one, in which we hoped all our luggage might be forwarded; but this plan our friends at Tiumen condemned. The question then remained, How could we see Tobolsk? The steamer in passing would stay but for an hour or two, and another boat would not follow for a week. The only alternative was to drive. But terrible accounts were given of the roads, which had not yet dried after the breaking up of the frost. Not to see Tobolsk, however, was out of the question, and we therefore determined to make the attempt by road, hoping to reach the city on Saturday, see the prisons on Monday, and take steamer the following day.

Accordingly, on Friday night, late, we left Tiumen in two tarantasses, with three horses to each. At the first station the post-master gave us warning that the roads were very bad, and that only one or two travellers had passed that way since the waters had subsided. On coming to the first river, it was found to be unapproachable at the usual place of embarkation. A ferry-boat had, therefore, to be brought to us, some six miles out of the way, and so we were kept waiting five hours. Whilst thus delayed, report said that the post-master kept hardly half the men required by his contract for working the ferry, and, further, that the men were sometimes extortionate. When, therefore we had rowed six miles down the stream to the landing-place, and the post-master could give no satisfactory reason why we had been thus kept, we thought it right, for the

benefit of future travellers, to enter in his "book for complaints," bearing the Government seal, our regrets that his neglect had detained us five hours.

About eleven o'clock the same night another episode occurred, which illustrates the pleasures of spring travelling in Siberia. The post-master gave us, what we never had before or after,—two outriders to convey us over a bad place on the road. Towards midnight we slept, when, being awakened by repeated shouting, I peeped out and saw that we were plunging among willows and mire. The outriders were holding up the tarantass to keep it from toppling over. Then came more shouting, with desperate jerking and pulling of the horses, which were up to their knees in bog, till solid ground was gained, and all stopped for breath. The next thing was to get the luggage tarantass through. We heard in the distance a crash, and lo! one of the shafts was broken. A horseman went back to the village for a new one, but in vain, and the old one was repaired. Whilst waiting we had time to look around. It was not yet morning, but the rays of the sun, which in northern countries are seen above the horizon all the night through at this time of the year, shed sufficient light on our darkness to give a weird appearance to all that was visible.

Silence was broken only by the incessant croaking of frogs, and by the men, who were relating to each other how they had got through. One had slipped into water up to his waist. The temperature was anything but warm; but, poor fellows! they seemed to regard things as in their normal condition, and uttered repeated thanks when they were dismissed with a gratuity of a few extra kopecks. Further on

we had to wade through water above the axletrees, and during the last stage to cross five streams, the last of which was the Irtish. Tobolsk at length was reached, but not until Sunday night, and after a journey of forty-eight hours instead of twenty, as we expected.

By posting from Tiumen to Tobolsk, we purchased experience of early summer roads; and, in so doing, saw things which I should be sorry to have missed.

TATARS OF KASAN.

Among these were several villages peopled exclusively by Siberian Tatars. These people differ in one important respect from most of the other nations living with the Russians in Siberia, in that they have a history and can look back to great princes who have made a name for themselves in the annals of the world. They are remnants of those who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in the days of Genghis Khan and his descendants, overran Northern Asia, and wrested

the land from its aboriginal inhabitants. They pushed their conquests to the Volga, and Serai, on that river, became the capital where their great Khans (known as the Khans of the Golden Horde) lived and reigned, and whence they long proved formidable antagonists to the Russians. At length came their disruption. Kasan was founded in the fifteenth century, and was the capital of a small khanate. A second khanate was that of Astrakhan, a third that of Krim, a fourth that of Tiumen—all fragments of the main horde which had collapsed in the fifteenth century. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, the Russians took from the Tatars Kasan and all else west of the Urals, and those on the east of the mountains, in the region of the Irtish, were afterwards subjugated by Yermak and his followers. Tatar villages may still be found between Kasan and Tobolsk, beyond which these people inhabit a district stretching south to the Kirghese hordes, and south-east as far as the Altai Mountains, and so joining the territory west of Irkutsk peopled by the Buriats.* The Tatars live among and are subject to their Russian conquerors; but the two races do not blend—one race being Christian, the other Mohammedan. The traveller is reminded of this by noticing

* Mr. Wahl, in his "Land of the Czar," which contains much valuable ethnographical information, gives the number of the Siberian Tatars of the governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk at 40,000. Dr. Latham also, in his "Native Races of the Russian Empire," traces their affinities with many peoples both in Europe and Asia, all of whom he classifies under the general name of Turks, and points out that the area covered by the Turkish stock is perhaps larger than that of any other race in the world. The general name of Turks includes the Tatars of Kasan, of Siberia, the Caucasus, and several other places; also the Kirghese, Yakutes, and many smaller tribes, some of which will hereafter be referred to under the respective provinces which they inhabit. The Turkish stock are, as to their religion, Christians, Pagans, and Mohammedans: Christians

that the Tatars, when on a journey, carry with them their wooden basins, for they will not drink from a vessel used by Russians; and so, in some parts, Russians will not drink from Tatar cups, though this exclusiveness wears away where Russians are many and Tatars are few. The Tatars have a good physique: dark eyes, swarthy skin, black hair, and high cheek-bones. Their strength of body is such as to make them excellent workmen, as may be seen by the enormous burdens they carry in loading vessels at Nijni Novgorod and Kasan. They are much liked in the capitals as coachmen, for they understand horses well. I heard good accounts of them likewise as servants in the hotel at Petersburg. They are not drunken, and are therefore valuable as waiters. Their women are supposed to wear veils, and do so in the cities. In the villages they content themselves with shawls, which are drawn nearly over the face when a stranger approaches. Men and boys, whether in the house or abroad, wear a small skull-cap, sometimes richly embroidered; and on high days some are seen with white turbans. These and their long cassock-like coats give the men a decidedly oriental appearance. Both men and women wear top-boots, and generally goloshes over them, so that, on entering the house or the mosque, they have only to slip off the goloshes to secure clean shoes.*

where they have been won over by the Russians to the Greek Church; Pagans where they have not been reached even by Mohammedanism, but have remained in the darkness of aboriginal Shamanism, as is still the case with a few of the Yakute Turks; and Mohammedans, which is the case for the most part with those of the country through which we passed.

* The natural home of the Turk or the Tatar is the steppe, where they dwell in tents, and are herdsmen, horsemen, and in some cases camel-drivers. Those we passed gain their livelihood by agriculture, by

In the Tatar villages the green domes and pinnacles of the Russian church, surmounted with the cross, were of course wanting; and in their places were found Mohammedan mosques, with minarets surmounted with the crescent. These latter reminded one of the shingled steeples of English village churches. Our first sight of Tatar worship was on the Volga, on board the steamer at sunset. Three Tatars approached the paddle-box, on a clean part of which they spread a small carpet. Leaving their goloshes on the deck, they knelt on the carpet, bowed their heads to the ground, and, rubbing their hands as if washing, chanted their prayers. They then appeared to pray silently in deepest reverence with closed eyes, and as if in total oblivion that a crowd was looking on. We were told that the pious pray thus at least three times a day, wherever they may be. At Kasan we had an opportunity of seeing their congregational worship in a Tatar mosque. Permission was given us to enter, if at the bottom of the stairs we would take off our goloshes, or, having none, our boots. The Mohammedan reason for this practice seemed to be that they did not wish to bring into the place anything soiled or unclean.

The building inside had a square room, with the barest of bare white walls, without attempt at ornament of any sort or kind. The only piece of furniture even was a high wooden rostrum approached by stairs, from which exhortations are delivered on Fridays. There were no chairs or benches, or any resemblance to an altar or table. Those who assembled early sat on the ground with their legs beneath them, apparently

the breeding of cattle, and by the transport of goods. Their houses were neat and cleanly, and compared favourably with those of the Russians.

for private prayer, reading, and meditation; but upon some one beginning to murmur in a low strain, all jumped up, ran to the front, and arranged themselves in ranks. They commenced their prayers by placing the thumb into or on the lower part of the ears, with the palms of the hands outwards. Then they stood, bowed, knelt, and then lowered the head to the ground. This is done a certain number of times, according to the hour of the day, twice at early morning, and increasing till five or more at the last of the five daily services. At the conclusion of prayer they passed their hands over their faces. All these external acts of devotion were done by each rank with the utmost precision, and the histrionic effect, as some would call it, was excellent; only that to one in the rear of four or five ranks of men, of each of whom nothing could be seen but the soles of their feet and the seats of their trousers, the spectacle was somewhat grotesque. In the less demonstrative parts of the service, however, there was not an eye that wandered, with the single exception of a man who bestowed a glance on us strangers; nor a man who did not behave in a manner becoming the occupation in which he was engaged. Some few who came in late did not join those whose service had begun, but commenced a separate one for themselves.

The floor was covered with clean matting, on which lay here and there a common rosary made of date-stones, ninety-nine in number, and divided by beads into three sections.

The Tatars objected to give us a translation in Russian of the prayers they said thereon. We heard elsewhere that they have ninety-nine names of God;

and a Tatar prisoner—apparently a gentleman—told me that they had a separate prayer for each bead. The uneducated, however, do not know these many names of the Deity. On the following day we had the opportunity of asking a monk concerning the Russian rosary, which differs from both the Mohammedan and the Roman.*

The Tatars can read the Scriptures in Turkish, and are apparently not indisposed to do so, provided it does not attract attention. A colporteur at Moscow told me that he sold fifty-seven copies to Tatars in the villages between Kasan and Perm, though they became angry in

* The mention of all three invites a short study in "comparative religions," which may be briefly made as follows:—The complete Roman rosary consists of 150 beads on a string, divided into 15 decades, between each of which is a large or distinctive bead. Where the two ends join there are 5 other beads attached, and at the loose end a crucifix. It is used thus:—On the crucifix is repeated the Creed; on the first bead the Lord's Prayer; on each of the next three the "Hail, Mary!" and on the fifth bead the Lord's Prayer. This is by way of introduction. Then on each of the first 10 beads are said these words: "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,—Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." When this has been said ten times, the "Pater Noster" is said on the dividing bead, and this is continued till 150 prayers have been offered to the Virgin, and 15 to "our Father," and then the odd beads are used in inverse order for a conclusion, as before for an introduction.

The Russian rosary looks smaller, but has also certain beads larger, or at least distinguishable from the others. It is not worn or used by ordinary members of the Russian Church, but only by monks and nuns. I was told by a nun at Moscow that they say on each bead, "May Jesus Christ have mercy on sinners!" but a monk at Kasan said (what is not irreconcilable with the former) that on each ordinary bead they say, "Lord God of heaven and Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us"; and on the large and distinctive bead they say a prayer either to Jesus Christ or the Virgin, the latter beginning something to this effect: "Thou mighty Mary, hear our prayers, and take away from thine unworthy servants all sin," etc. Lastly, we were told that the Mohammedan continues to say on his rosary, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet"; and that if they do not know the ninety-nine names of God they merely count the beads.

the larger towns if he attempted openly to sell them in the Tatar quarter. I took with me a few Turkish gospels, and among the prisoners at Barnaul found three Tatars, one of whom could read. As we re-passed the door of their room, all three were seen sitting with their legs beneath them, the two illiterate ones listening to their scholarly friend with eager attention. We met several of this race in prison and elsewhere, as we proceeded onwards, but I do not remember passing through whole villages of Tatars after we left the district of Tobolsk. Hence we were the more glad not to have missed these.

CHAPTER VI.

SIBERIAN PRISONS.

Old Finnish prisons.—Model Petersburg prison.—Officers.—Contraband importations.—Russian prisons of six kinds.—Siberian prisons of three kinds: their number, location, structure, furniture.—Prisoners: their classification.—Kansk statistics.—Method of trial.—Remands.—Exchanging names and punishments.

THE prisons of Russia occupy a position midway between the dungeons of the Middle Ages and the modern cellular abodes for criminals of the nineteenth century. A few of them, however, approach very near these extremes on either side. With regard to Finland, it is hardly fair to hold the Russian Government responsible for the condition of its prison affairs, because, although the Emperor is Grand Duke of that country, he allows these liege subjects to make their own laws. Nevertheless, I can never forget the vividness with which my boyhood's reading came back to me of Robin Hood and the dungeons of Nottingham Castle, when I first visited the old prisons of Åbo and Wiborg. The descent by steps with candles to prisoners in the lower rooms, the dim light entering by windows in walls ten feet thick, the clanking of chains, the like to which I have seen in no other country except perhaps Mongolia—these things spoke more eloquently than a visit to the former prison of Sir Walter Raleigh, or even the unused Ratisbon chamber for the torture of

Protestant heretics; and that because these northern prisons were inhabited by living men. The majority of the Finnish prisons, however, and certainly all the new ones, are better than the two I have mentioned; though, unless a change has taken place since 1876, the Finns still have and use sets of irons nearly ten times the weight of any others I have seen in Europe. To pass to the other extreme. One sees in Petersburg a brand-new prison, which may be supposed to represent the very beau ideal of what a house of detention ought to be.

It is only right to say, however, before going further, that the condition of prisons and criminals in Russia is in a transitional state. The authorities have seen the necessity for reforms for at least 20 years, and great pains have been taken that these reforms should be made judiciously and effectively. Deputies have been sent to visit the prisons of other countries and report thereon; a commission has been appointed to receive the reports, to consider and debate, and so thoroughly to "shed upon the question the light of science." All this has been done, and the reforms are yearly expected to take place, pecuniary reasons alone delaying the change for the better. Meanwhile a model prison has been built in the capital, and those who wish to see what Russia *can* do should visit this house of detention for persons awaiting their trial. It is built in the shape of a right angle, having two long corridors four storeys high. There are 285 separate cells for men, 32 for women, others for confinement in common, as well as places for associated and solitary exercise. Into cell No. 227 the late Emperor once entered, of which they keep up the remembrance by

allowing no one to be confined therein. No expense appears to have been spared in building the prison. The floors are of asphalte, and the door of each cell is of solid oak. Within are iron bedsteads, made to fold and hook up neatly against the wall. The tables and seats are of sheet iron, with hinges; and, both within the cells and without, every article and fitting of brass is rubbed to a high degree of polish. The officers move about noiselessly in felt shoes, so that they can unexpectedly and at any moment observe a prisoner through the wire-covered inspection-holes. In the infirmary are 10 cells for those who are to be kept apart, and 32 beds for those who live in common. There is likewise a room in which 40 men may mingle by day, and a general sleeping apartment with 36 bedsteads, across each of which wire is stretched, making for the prisoner a hard but clean, and, I should imagine, not uncomfortable bed. There is also a room for bookbinding, where a few can work.

The building contains three places of worship, for Russians, Roman Catholics, and Protestants respectively, the Russian having a very handsome *ikonostasis* and chandelier; and I was pleased to find that, if a man can read, he has always a New Testament in his cell, and further that, by asking, he can obtain from the library other books in addition. This is as it should be.

In the female division we found for warders superior-looking young women dressed in uniform, the insignia of office on their collars being a pair of crossed keys. Some of the women prisoners, as with the men, are placed together in common, and in some cases they have their choice of solitary or social life. This is true in a sense other than that which first

appears; for one lady prisoner, a criminal condemned to Siberia, was about to take to herself a husband before proceeding thither, and the happy event was to be celebrated in the prison on the morning after my visit. Peeping through the food aperture of one of the doors was the face of a pretty young woman, a political prisoner, in whose possession had been found suspicious books. There was a women's reception-room, having a bath warmed by gas; but as it was found to cost about five shillings to heat, it is not surprising that this particular bath is seldom used.

Dark cells were shown to us, in which a prisoner may not be put for more than six successive days. The place where prisoners were allowed to converse with their friends was dark, which is not usual; and I observed in it no place for an officer to sit between the parties whilst they were speaking.

The attempts of the authorities to keep the prisoners from intercourse with one another, and with the outer world, do not yet appear to be perfectly successful.

A	B	C	D	E

The Polish prisoners in Warsaw, according to M. Andreoli, had a plan by which they could pass news in a couple of hours to all the prisoners in the fortress. A square was divided into 25 spaces for the 25 letters,

of the Polish alphabet. One knock was understood to mean A, two knocks B, and so on; or, again, these signals might be changed by one knock, signifying V, and so forth; this dumb speech being kept up by tapping on the walls. This, however, is only one method.

In the chapel of the model prison at Petersburg are 24 boxes for prisoners whom they wish to keep from holding communication with each other, even by a look. But the partitions which separate them are only of wood, and I observed that those I entered had been furtively bored with small holes, through which conversation could be held. Again, the prisoners are allowed to receive food from their friends outside, and, although it is first examined by the officials, the friends manage sometimes to introduce for the prisoners some strange culinary concoctions. There were brought to a man, for instance, one day 230 roubles in a basin of buttermilk. Again, another man was frequently found the worse for drink in his cell. Milk was regularly brought to him, and duly tasted by the authorities; but still the man got drunk. At last they discovered that the jug in which the milk was brought had a false bottom with an aperture in the handle, and so the mystery was solved. What will not topers do to procure drink? On arriving at Werchne Udinsk, we heard that a drunken woman had just been detected in trying to smuggle spirits into the prison in a pig's entrails!

I saw quite a collection of contraband articles at Petersburg, which had been found in the possession of prisoners. Among them were knives (one ingeniously made from a steel pen), playing cards, and dominoes—all of them of original and unique, if not of artistic,

character; also a file, for which a prisoner had given a warder 50 shillings. The man, too, had made busy use of his purchase. He set his mind upon breaking loose, and thought to file through a bar of iron an inch or more thick that confined him. But he could do his work only during the time that the warders were at dinner and at supper, and then not too loudly, giving 200 strokes of the file at dinner and 100 at supper time. He went on thus for three months, and then managed to break the iron. But he was detected, and condemned to Siberia, whither he had already been sent before, and whence he had managed to escape. There he has probably by this time found less costly and well-built prisons from which to break loose.

Before speaking, however, of the prisons of Siberia, it may be well to observe that in European Russia there are at least six various kinds of prisons. There is, first, the fortress—such as that at Schlüsselburg, in which it is generally supposed are confined grave offenders, especially the political and revolutionary. I have not visited one of these. Next there are military prisons, in which severity of discipline is said to be similar to that of the fortress. Then there are hard-labour prisons, in which long-term convicts work out their sentences. There are also houses of correction, where short-term prisoners do the same; likewise houses of detention, in which persons are kept awaiting their trial. I heard also of "houses of industry," which, unless I am mistaken, are somewhat like our reformatories; and, lastly, there are buildings in which prisoners on their march to distant places stay temporarily—some only for a few days, others for weeks. These nice distinctions, however, can be drawn only in large towns in European

Russia. In Siberia, especially in small towns, the same building serves for all classes of prisoners, the best arrangement practicable being made for special cases. Speaking generally, and from my own observation rather than from accurate information upon the subject, there appeared to me to be in Siberia three classes of buildings which the English would call by the general name of prisons. There is, first, the *étape*, in which exiles on the march rest for a night or two; next, the *perisylnie* prison, in which, for various reasons, exiles may have to wait—it may be during the winter, or until the ice be broken up on the rivers; and, thirdly, the *ostrog*, which means a stronghold, and is a prison in general, where a man may be simply confined, work at a trade, or eat and sleep after working outside in the fields or mines. I have no statistics of the total number of prisons of all sorts in Siberia, but suppose it cannot be less than 300, which may be roughly computed thus: Nikolaefsk is more than 9,000 versts from Tiumen, and, supposing that convicts walk 30 versts a day, they would require 300 resting-places for that route alone. Some parts of the way, it is true, are traversed in summer by river communication; but no notice has been taken in my estimate of off-lying routes north and south, as, for instance, to Yakutsk, Barnaul, etc. The expenses, therefore, of building and keeping in repair this vast number of prisons must be very considerable.

As to the location of the prisons. The *étapes* are found all along the road from Tiumen to the Amur. There will also be found a prison or lock-up in most of the principal towns. But of the larger buildings there is one at Tiumen for the reception of all the ordinary

exiles as they come from Russia, and from which, as already stated, they are distributed over Siberia. At Tobolsk are three hard-labour prisons, with about 1,000 convicts, in which prisoners often spend part of their terms before going further east. The next building of similar dimensions is called the Alexandreffsky central prison, about 50 miles from Irkutsk, where are some 1,500 hard-labour convicts. Continuing east, there were formerly some large hard-labour prisons at Chita and Nertchinsk, tidings from which, in years gone by, have caused many an ear to tingle; but since the Russians have gained the Amur, and many of the mines have passed from Government into private hands, the great bulk of the convicts have been sent further east. At Kara, on the Shilka, for instance, is a large penal colony, where there are upwards of 2,000 convicts living in and about six prisons, the men being supposed to work in the gold-mines. After Kara, the next large colony is on the island of Sakhalin, which represents the utmost bound of Russian penal life. I have said nothing of the prisons in the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk, as I did not go there. There is or was a large prison at Omsk, through which exiles used formerly to pass; but, now their route has been changed, it serves only for local purposes. They have no prisons in these provinces, I believe, of considerable dimensions.

Some of the larger prisons in Siberia, especially those of stone, were not originally built for their present purpose. There are certain features, however, about the others which are more or less common to all. The Siberian prison, like the houses of the Siberian people, is usually built of logs calked with

moss to keep out the cold. Near the principal building, but generally detached, are the kitchen, the bath-house, exercise-yard, stores for provisions, out-houses, etc., and enclosing the whole is a high palisade of wooden poles pointed at the top. From the fact that almost all the new prisons of Europe are built upon the cellular plan, the detained being kept solitary, it appears to have been recognised as a principle that the old method of herding prisoners together is a bad one. The same principle would seem to have been adopted also by Russia, in that the plan of the new house of detention in the capital is in the main cellular. In Siberia, however, the old plan continues, and usually the prisons inside are divided into large rooms or wards, in each of which the principal feature is an inclined wooden plane, resembling that of a guard-room bed, upon which the prisoners sit and lounge by day, and sleep by night. If the room be square, this divan or platform is placed against three of the walls, or, if it be oblong, there may be a passage up the centre, from which the sleeping places ascend to the walls on either side; or, lastly, if the room be very large, there are two platforms meeting like a low gable in the centre of the room, and two others against the walls. Thus space is economised, and as many as 40 or 50 men (once I found 100) are packed in a room. There are usually a few separate cells for political or special offenders, and one or two for punishment.

Connected with the large prisons are usually a hospital, one or more chapels, sometimes a school-room, and a few workshops.

The large rooms or wards have little or no furniture. Each is provided with an *ikon*, or sacred picture, and

sometimes with a shelf on which the inmates may put their spoons, combs, and other table and toilet requisites with which they provide themselves.

Concerning the prisoners, it has been already intimated that those belonging to the upper classes are kept apart. There is a further classification in some of the large prisons according to the crimes committed: a room for murderers; a second for forgers and utterers of base money; a third for thieves, and generally two or three for "vagabonds"—that is, not merely for vagrants in the English sense of the word, but generally for persons who have run away from supervision, who have no papers, and can give no good account of themselves.*

The number of persons in Siberian prisons awaiting their trial, or the confirmation of their sentences, is very considerable. This leads me to speak of the

* Some statistics with which we were favoured from Kansk for the previous year, 1878, give interesting facts, showing the ages of criminals when they committed their crimes, their education, condition as to marriage, religion, place of birth, and also their repetition of crimes. It should be borne in mind, however, that the figures refer only to a small district of Eastern Siberia, an *okrug* or circle, 200 miles in diameter, and with a population of 40,000. They are therefore primarily of local value, though in their general aspects they are highly suggestive. The number of criminals was 121 male and 61 female: in all, 182. Of these there were 31 from 17 to 21 years of age; 83 from 21 to 33; 45 from 38 to 45; and 33 from 45 to 70. The figures, too, show curiously enough that up to the age of 33 the proportion of male criminals is largely in excess of the females, but that after that age this order is reversed, and the proportion of female prisoners preponderates over that of the males. Of the entire number, 182, not one is marked "well educated," only 46 could read and write, and 136 could do neither; 129 out of 182 were married, leaving 53 widows, bachelors, and spinsters. With respect to religious profession, they were classified thus: 112 were orthodox Russians, and 19 of other Christian denominations; 34 were Jews, and 17 of other non-Christian religions: 180 were born in the province; 22 had offended twice, and 3 had done so thrice.

courts, the judges, and their mode of trial. Since November 20th, 1860, law reforms were begun in Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa, with their respective districts; and the new method of trial resembles that of England, with a mixture of certain French elements and some local introductions from Russia. Under the new *régime* in European Russia there are three courts, namely: those of the Judge of the Peace; the Assizes; and the Senate. A Judge of the Peace tries civil cases involving interests up to £50, and criminal cases involving a year's punishment or less. Appeal from his decision may be made to a periodical meeting of Judges of the Peace for the district. At the court of Assizes, which consists of from three to nine persons with a president, trial is made by jury. The names of persons liable to serve are put into an urn, from which 36 are drawn by lot. From these the procureur, who is the public prosecutor, may, without assigning any reason, strike off eight, and likewise the prisoner's advocate a greater number, bringing them down to 14. Then, if this jury decide that the prisoner be guilty, the opinion is asked of both procureur and advocate as to what punishment, according to the code, in their opinion should be inflicted; after which the president gives the decision of the court. The Senate is simply a court of appeal—does not re-try cases, but merely judges whether or not in the lower court the law has been rightly administered.

Trial by jury is not yet introduced into Siberia, but offenders are judged by a tribunal consisting of odd numbers, of not more than seven nor less than three. The tribunal is a standing institution, the members of which are paid according to their grade—

from about £70 to £100 a year. A procureur (who is an officer of the Government) prosecutes; and a barrister, retained by the prisoner, defends. Witnesses are called on both sides, and the tribunal decides by a majority of votes whether the prisoner be guilty or not. In case of even numbers being present, or of equal voting, the president has a vote and a half; but should the president be absent, and there be an even number for and against the prisoner, then the defendant in this and all similar cases has the benefit of the doubt. Should a verdict of guilty be returned, the tribunal decides the punishment according to the regulation of the code. In capital or important cases, however, in Siberia, such as murder, the judgment of the tribunal must be confirmed by the Governor-General; and hence, when the vastness of the country is considered, it will be seen why prisoners sometimes wait so long uncondemned. Suppose, for instance, a man commits a murder in a place which happens to be at a distance from the town where a tribunal sits. Some one goes to the authorities, deposes that a murder has been committed, gives evidence in writing, and the culprit is arrested. If the culprit can find bail he may remain free till wanted (in Russia it is enough for this purpose to deposit, as a guarantee of returning, a certain sum of money); but if unable to find bail he must go to prison till he can be sent, suppose, to Nikolaefsk. If it be winter, it would be too costly—the Amur being frozen—to send him by horses; he must therefore wait till the following June for the opening of the navigation. Then, having proceeded to Nikolaefsk, he is tried, perhaps within a week, found guilty, and his punishment determined, after which it is necessary that the

papers concerning his case be sent to the Governor-General at Irkutsk, a distance, there and back, of 5,000 miles; and so the prisoner must wait till his sentence is confirmed. Meanwhile he is supplied with a paper, which is, I presume, his ticket of indictment.*

Whether, when the case is fully ended, the prisoner keeps this or a similar paper, I am not quite sure. I am under the impression that he does, at all events whilst he is on the road to his destination; and, further, that these papers serve as capital on which the prisoners exercise their ingenuity for their mutual convenience. I mean in this fashion: Ivan Nepomnoostchi has a ticket condemning him to five years' labour in the coal-mines of Sakhalin, whilst the ticket of Augustus Poniatowski condemns him for a similar time to the gold-mines of Kara. For reasons best known to themselves, the one prefers country life and a cottage or prison near a wood, whilst the other inclines to a residence at the sea-side. So they change their tickets, their names, and, as far as they can, their beings, and sometimes manage in this way to effect what they wish. I have even heard of prisoners inducing those who are free to exchange places with them, the bargain being effected of course by money, and carried out

* The following is a translation of such a paper, which is divided into six columns, with a printed heading to each, and filled up as follows:—

1. Surname, patronym, Christian name, and occupation of prisoner. (*Gregory, son of Nicholas M——, a peasant.*)
2. Age. (39.)
3. Crime. (*Wrong passport.*)
4. When and by whose order imprisoned. (*On 9 April. Tomsk district police.*)
5. When the case was tried and how it stands. (*Terminated on 4 May, 1879. Now under revision.*)
6. Remarks. (*He begs it may be quickly ended.*)

whilst a gang of several hundreds is marching on to a steamer, for instance, where heads are counted, but where they cannot recognize faces. Goryantchikoff represents the "changing of names" as taking place in the presence of prisoner witnesses, and when several of the party are more or less intoxicated, the price given being sometimes as much as 30 or 40 roubles. All are bound to secrecy by esoteric law, and as the man receiving the money generally spends it quickly in drink and so cannot restore it, he not infrequently finds, when too late, that he has sold his liberty, or exchanged a lighter to receive a heavier punishment for a few glasses of brandy. This is dangerous work, however, for at some of the jails they take down a full description of the prisoners, though they do not usually photograph them, as in England. At Alexandreffsky, for instance, they have a large book, the pages of which are filled with columns headed as follows :—Name, age, crime, and punishment; from whence; appearance; term of punishment; arrival; single or married; religion; date of sentence; from what prison in Russia; remarks, etc.

I am not sure that I have given all the process by which they manage the transfer of tickets, but what is written may perhaps render intelligible the crime charged upon a roomful of prisoners at Irkutsk, who, we were told, had been "changing their names."

The present state of things, however, as regards prisons and exiles, must, as already stated, be regarded as temporary, since the reforms of 1860 have been now extended as far as the Urals, and it is only a question of money when they shall be spread to Siberia also.

CHAPTER VII.

SIBERIAN PRISONS (continued).

Charitable committees.—Prison food.—Clothing.—Work.—Hard labour.—Exercise.—Amusements.—Privileges.—Intercourse with friends.—punishments.—Capital punishment.—Corporal punishment.—Irons.—Prison discipline.—Flogging.—Exceptional severities.

THE Russians introduce or allow the introduction into their prisons of an ameliorating influence, in the form of local committees, for furthering the temporal welfare of the prisoners. "You see," said to me the president of one of these committees, "we have two elements in the government of our prisoners. The police strive for the letter of the law, whilst we strive for kindness to the prisoner." Thus justice and mercy go hand in hand; and when they happen to fall out, I fancy that in Siberia, after their easy-going fashion, mercy not unfrequently wins the day. Whether all prisons have local committees I do not know; but we came in contact with the operations of several. The members take upon themselves to superintend, clothe, and educate the children of prisoners; and in more than one place we found admirable asylums built for this purpose. They also lend a helping hand to prisoners' wives, and at Irkutsk we found they had supplied the prison with a library. Their exertions, however, do not stop here; for they look after and in

some cases improve and augment the prisoners' food. The Government allows for each prisoner so much money a day. At Ekaterineburg, for instance, to the common exiles 10 kopecks; to the upper classes 15 kopecks. At Irkutsk we met an upper-class prisoner who had 17½ kopecks, which he received in money. The prisoners who remain at Ekaterineburg are allowed 6 kopecks a day. Instead, however, of each spending his 6 kopecks, the whole is taken and dispensed by the committeé in the purchase for the general caldron of meat, vegetables, etc.; and they somehow manage out of threehalfpence a head to give to each prisoner two dishes of food. Whether the committee appeal to the public for funds I know not. At Tomsk we heard that each director of the prison committee gave his ten roubles annually, whilst from the neighbouring villages were brought presents of flour and other kinds of food. Again, it is common to see, outside prison gates, boxes in which may be placed offerings for the welfare of the prisoners; and such is the liberality of the people in this direction, especially on festivals, that in Petersburg those detained get more Easter eggs than they can eat. All this speaks of kindness on the part of the public towards prisoners, in which particular I know no nation that equals the Russian. Further allusion will be made to this hereafter.

Apart, however, from these philanthropic efforts, the reader will perhaps get a better idea of Siberian prison diet from details which came under our own observation. At Tiumen each man was said to receive daily 2½ lbs. (Russian) of bread, ½ lb. of meat on ordinary days, and ¾ lb. on holidays, with salt, pepper, etc., also a daily allowance of quass for drink. The fare in Tobolsk prison

was the same, a bucketful of quass or small-beer being provided for every ten men. At Nikolaefsk I heard of corned beef and *kash*, or corn, substituted for vegetables. At the Alexandreffsky prison they had ½ lb. of meat, including the bone, and 2½ lbs. of bread. At Kara, however, where the men work in the mines, the allowance is still more liberal. Each receives daily 4 lbs. of bread, 1 lb. of meat, ¼ lb. of buckwheat, with tea, but no quass.* At Kara, when not working, they receive 3 lbs. of bread, ½ lb. of meat, and $\frac{1}{12}$th of a lb. of buckwheat. We found in some of the prisons that, if they do not eat all their food, the prisoners may sell the remainder; or, again, the surplus bread may be used for making quass, which, when given, always comes, I believe, from these "economies." The diet, however, is considerably affected by the rigour with which fast-days are observed in the prisons. Every Wednesday and Friday are fast-days, and there are four great annual fasts, with an aggregate of at least a hundred days, so that there are probably quite half the days in the year when the prisoners get fast diet, which excludes flesh food. I understood, however, that this does not apply to those at hard labour; while other prisoners, during some of the long fasts, receive fish and fish-soup—the latter *ad libitum*. So at least it is at

* If this highest scale of Siberian diet be compared with the highest scale in the prisons of England and Wales, as printed in the Reports of the Commissioners, Inspectors, and others for 1878, it will be found that the English prisoner gets per week of bread 10 lbs. against the Russian 25; the Englishman has 8 oz. of cooked meat and 14 pints of soup against the Russian's 6 lbs. of meat; whilst the Russian has besides 1½ lb. of buckwheat and tea against the Englishman's 5 lbs. of potatoes, 1½ lb. of suet pudding, 14 pints of porridge and cocoa. In fact, the Englishman has per week 17½ lbs. of solid food, 3 pints of soup, 14 pints of porridge and cocoa, whilst the Russian has 33 lbs. of solid food, and tea.

Tobolsk. If a man happens to be in a position to buy tea or such luxuries, he may do so, and his friends may, if they please, bring him food daily. Thus a man ought not to starve in a Siberian prison.

Nor is he left without clothing. Prisoners awaiting their trial, also exiles losing partial rights, may, if they choose, wear their own clothes, or, if they have none suitable, they are supplied by the Government. Those who lose all their rights, however, must wear convicts' clothing. This consists, in summer, of a linen shirt and pair of trousers, and a peasant's coat of camel's hair, a specimen of which last I bought for five shillings. Those condemned to hard labour have two yellow diamond-shaped patches sewn on the back; those without labour have one piece only. Other marks of a similar character indicate the province from which they come. At Kara a coat of felt is given yearly. A shirt must last six months, and is washed once a week; whilst in summer a pair of rough leather shoes or slippers is served out every 22 days. Those working in the mines are provided also with leather gloves.*

Concerning their labour, I seriously avow my belief that in many cases the hardest part of a Siberian prisoner's lot is not the work imposed upon him, but the *absence* of it. This appeared to prevail among the prisoners up to Kara.

* The annual cost of provisions for each prisoner at Kara is 65 roubles and 72½ kopecks—say £6 10s., and for men's clothing 39 roubles 8½ kopecks, or £4. Women's clothing is rather less expensive, so that the annual cost for food and clothing of men is £10 10s., and of women £10. In the new prison at Petersburg my notes give 25 kopecks a day as the cost for each prisoner, 15 kopecks being spent for food. This represents for the year 91 roubles 25 kopecks (rather more than £9), and 54 roubles 75 kopecks (£5 10s.) respectively, and excludes, I presume, the item of clothing, since this prison at the capital is for those awaiting trial, and who consequently wear their own clothes.

I met at different places two Poles, who came to the east condemned to hard labour, but who got off exceedingly lightly. What one said amounted to this: that if he liked to work he worked, but if not he let it alone. The authorities told me, in one instance, that they cannot now find enough work for the exiles. Many of the mines have passed from Government into private hands, and some even of those remaining are more or less exhausted. Hence a part of the Russian criminals, who of old would probably have been exiled, are now detained in large prisons in European Russia, such as at Pskof, Wilna, Kharkhof, Orenberg, Simbirsk, Perm, etc.; but the plan has only lessened, not removed, the difficulty of finding useful yet laborious occupation for the condemned. When, therefore, it is remembered that a large number of the criminals cannot read, and that for those who can there has hitherto been, to say the least, but a poor supply of books, the tedium can be easily imagined of imprisonment without work in Siberia. Accordingly, it was little matter for surprise that we heard at Alexandreffsky of prisoners begging for work. In some of the prisons opportunities are afforded for the detained to work, which gives them employment, and also enables them to earn a little money with which to buy comforts. Some, however, are condemned to labour, which labour may be done for the Government direct, or it may be let out by the Government to private persons or companies, as at Kara, where some of the convicts work in private mines belonging to the Emperor, and at Dui in Sakhalin, where the coal-mines are worked by a commercial company.

Thus the work of convicts, when they are put to it,

is mainly of three degrees of severity,—that of the fabric, the zavod, and the mines, which I understand to mean as follows. Fabric work is that of a manufactory, or the labour of ordinary mechanics, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, joiners, shoemakers, tailors, etc. The best Russian prison I have seen of this kind was at Petersburg, on the Wiborg side of the Neva, which had almost the busy hum of a factory, where everything seemed well arranged and kept going; but in the prisons of Tobolsk, which I understood to be of this character, there seemed an insufficient number of workshops in proportion to the number of criminals. The word *zavod* is synonymous with our "works" for the founding and casting of metals; and for this, I presume, is sometimes substituted heavy outdoor or indoor work, such as making bricks, mending roads, or manufacturing salt. But of this class of work we saw next to none, save a handful of men at Alexandreffsky, returning from making bricks. Once more, the mines are of at least three sorts—gold, silver, and coal. The work of the gold-mines resembles the labour of English navvies in making a cutting, whilst that of silver and coal, being underground, is more difficult. From reports I heard, however, of these latter two, it did not appear that the convicts were by any means overworked; but further details upon this matter will be furnished hereafter. Those condemned to the hardest labour need, of course, no special time for exercise. The prisoners without labour are allowed at Alexandreffsky an hour a day for this purpose, which appeared to me too little. More generally, however, we found they had a happy-go-lucky way, especially in the smaller prisons, of opening the doors in the morning, and letting the

prisoners, if they did not misbehave themselves, go in and out of the yard as they liked—to sleep, talk, or bask in the sun, and in some cases to smoke.

I am not aware that the authorities permit the prisoners any amusements, though it has been already intimated that they find them for themselves—sometimes in the shape of cards, with which, if report be true, having nothing else to play for, they gamble away their food.

But we have not yet exhausted the prisoners' privileges. Here are some more of them, though probably they are not the same in all the prisons. According to a convict's behaviour he is placed in a certain category; and the longer he remains therein, and the better he behaves, the more ameliorations he gets. For instance, if a man condemned to fifteen years' hard labour conducts himself well, he serves only thirteen years and two months, and, towards the end of the time, gains certain other privileges. If condemned to wear irons four years, he may, in a similar manner, lessen the time by one-third; if in the higher category, he receives 15 per cent. of what he earns by working for the Government, and in his spare time he may work on his own account; if in the lower category, he earns money, but it is withheld until he advances higher. At Alexandreffsky prisoners may receive money from their friends, up to a rouble a week, but not more. At Kara some prisoners are not allowed thus to receive money, but I heard of others there who receive as much as £15 a year, and who also receive visits once or twice a week from, not mere acquaintances—which is not allowed—but their families, who may also daily, if they please, bring them food

I was told at one large prison that, strictly speaking, it was not permitted to prisoners (except political ones) to write to their friends, which seemed to confirm what I had heard and what I have written elsewhere. But unofficial persons denied this, saying that prisoners are free to write, and this also we heard at some of the prisons. The two statements may perhaps be reconciled thus: that it is one of those cases (and there are many such in Siberian prisons) in which the letter of the law is supposed to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Once more, if men are well behaved, they get, before the expiration of a long sentence, into a position comparatively comfortable. They are allowed to live outside the prison with their wives and families; they may have their house and garden, still working a certain number of hours per day, and obliged to be in their homes by night; but otherwise they are free to do what they list, and are much in the same position as that of an ordinary labourer.

I have yet to speak of punishments, which are of two kinds—those decreed by the civil courts and courts martial, and those subsequently incurred in Siberia. Concerning the former two, it is not quite accurate to say that in Russia there is no capital punishment, since there are at least three offences for which death is the penalty, namely: (1) offences against the persons of the Imperial family, and certain laws concerning them; (2) military crimes, or, what is equivalent, crimes committed when a place is in a state of siege; (3) breaking quarantine laws, such as permitting a vessel with infectious diseases to come into a Russian port. But in these cases culprits are turned over to a military

tribunal, which alone can sentence to death; in accordance with which I was told of a case happening in 1877 in Sakhalin, wherein some convicts, with much brutality, killed a whole family, and were sentenced to be shot; but this is rare, and since the convicts had already lost all rights, it would perhaps be considered hardly an exception to the rule that murder in Russia is not followed by capital punishment.

Nor, again, does the Russian law inflict upon any *free* man corporal punishment. The knout has been abolished for some years. They do, however, put their prisoners in irons, which for the legs weigh from about five to nine pounds English; and if a man rebels, he may get them as heavy as fourteen pounds. I was told, however, that the new chains weigh only five pounds. Those for the wrists weigh two pounds.

As to the period for wearing them, accounts differed. At Alexandreffsky, up to eighteen months usually; at Kara, four years; whilst, at Tobolsk, it was said that prisoners might be in chains from two months to eight years. The manner of carrying the fetters is as follows. Over the leg is worn a coarse woollen stocking, and over that a piece of thick linen cloth; then come the trousers, over which is bound on the shins a pad of leather. A stranger might wonder at first how the trousers could be taken off; and to satisfy our curiosity, a prisoner in Tiumen showed us how it was done, which gave me the opportunity to observe, when his leg was bare, that it had no marks from wearing the irons. On each leg a ring is not locked, but *riveted.* To these rings is attached a chain of about three feet in length, which, for convenience in walking, is usually suspended in the middle by a string from the waist.

This may seem severe enough for English ideas of the present day, but I saw heavier on the legs of two murderers in America. Russian chains, however, are playthings compared with some to be seen in Finland, and which I have put on. In bringing the prisoners in Finland from the country districts to the towns, they make use of the farmers' carts; and it sometimes happens that the cart is waylaid by accomplices, and

A FINNISH MURDERER IN TRAVELLING IRONS.

the prisoner delivered. To prevent this, therefore, they in some cases put on an extraordinary suit of irons, which outdo those I saw even in China. First, there is a collar for the neck and a girdle for the body, which two are connected by means of chains, the hands likewise being fastened to the girdle. On each ankle is put an iron stirrup or socket, which projects over the front of the feet far enough to receive through its holes a heavy iron bar, weighing thirty-six pounds,

the whole weight of which is made to rest on the prisoner's insteps and to connect the feet. Then from the middle of the bar comes another chain, fastening it to the girdle. The whole is of iron, and weighs about 108 lbs. It should be added that these are seldom used in Finland, and then only for desperate characters; but in Russia no such chains exist. The heaviest of the Russian irons are about the weight, I imagine, of those formerly in use in England, if one may judge from the pair called "Jack Sheppard's irons," which are kept as a curiosity in Newgate. Moreover, if report be true, there is a good deal of *hocus-pocus* connected with Siberian fetters. To an ordinary observer the fetters look riveted on in such a manner that without a smith it would appear impossible to get them off. The largèness of the rings, however, to allow of their fitting over the stocking, the bandage of linen, the trousers, and then the leather gaiter, will make it probable that, on the removal of these bandages, it may be possible in some cases to slip out the naked foot. However that may be, I heard from another source, not to be doubted, that a certain governor of a province, on visiting one of his prisons, was moved with compassion, and ordered that the chains should be struck off the prisoners; upon which they wriggled and kicked them off with such alacrity as to leave no doubt on his mind that they had been donned as uniform in which to receive his Excellency's visit. A released prisoner has told me that so dexterous do they become in pressing the thumb into the palm of the hand, that they used to slip off their handcuffs and sleep without them. M. Andreoli also mentions in his account that, whilst on

the march, the payment of four roubles to the soldiers in charge got them free of the chain to which they were attached, on the understanding, however, that the guard should not be got into trouble by any one running away, and that the iron should be properly affixed when approaching the town or their resting-place for the night. He also mentions that, in a drove of 147 prisoners, there were 21—that is, a seventh—wearing chains. Throughout Siberia I saw only one man wearing handcuffs; but, in Western Siberia, chains were seen on the legs of many—how many I cannot say, but less, I should think, than a seventh; and this proportion markedly decreased as we proceeded further east.

The courts sometimes order a man—generally one who has run away repeatedly—to be chained, on reaching his destination, to a barrow or implement, which thus always accompanies him wherever he may go. A doctor informed me that he had seen a prisoner's ticket with such a doom thereon within the previous twelve months; and I heard that at Sakhalin one or two ferocious characters were thus confined; but I saw none. There were none, I found on inquiry, among the two thousand at Kara; and such treatment was said to be exceedingly rare.

With regard to punishments inflicted for insubordination to prison authorities, or for subsequent crimes of convicts, the mildest form is incarceration in a solitary cell. A man is next deprived, in part, of food and minor comforts, as in England. Then, if not already in irons, he may have them put on; or, if this do not suffice, he may be "birched," after the fashion in which our fathers corrected us. I witnessed this

performance at Nikolaefsk. Having heard on a Saturday—which is there the day for flogging—that a man was to receive 60 stripes with the rod, I thought it right, since the visitation of prisons was my speciality, to go and see it, and thus shirk no occasion of witnessing with my eyes what I learned through my ears. The man was a released convict, of horrible countenance, who had served his time in confinement, and was subsequently taken as a joiner into a merchant's establishment, and he had rewarded his employer by robbing him. Accordingly, in the police station, he was brought from his room to the presence of the police-master. Behind the culprit stood a Cossack, and at his side a clerk, who read over his sentence. The prisoner then signed the paper, to signify that he had heard it read, and was marched back to another room and placed on the floor, with his back laid bare, one Cossack holding his head and another his feet. Two soldiers then inflicted the stripes successively, whilst a third counted aloud the number administered. The man wriggled and roared, and the skin became very red, but I saw no blood, and the operation was soon over.

I came away, I confess, considerably perturbed; but the Nikolaefsk folks said that was *nothing*, and further informed me that, for the commission of other than very serious offences, they frequently deal in this summary manner with released convicts, both male and female. The switches composing the rod, according to M. Andreoli, must, by law, be sufficiently small to allow of three being passed together into the muzzle of a musket. Those I saw reminded me of a dame's birch, save that they were longer, and the switches somewhat

stouter than those formerly seen in schools—indeed, *facsimiles* of those used in the prison of Cold Bath Fields in London. A marvellous feature of the case is that some of the men (ay, and women too) not only receive the rod, but laugh and are impudent after it. One of my hosts in another town told me that some years ago, soon after the Amur came into the hands of the Russians, he was robbed by a soldier of some clothes, upon which the police-master sentenced the thief to receive 500 stripes with the birch rod; but the governor hearing of it increased the number to 1,100. My host was asked if he were willing to see the stripes inflicted; and, going at five in the morning, he saw 500 administered. As the man lay on the grass, and as each rod was worn out, it was replaced by a new one from a heap lying by. The prosecutor begged that the rest might be remitted, and came away. The whole number, however, were administered, and the man was kept in the hospital for a fortnight, at the end of which time he came to his prosecutor to ask for a glass of grog, and said that for a bottleful of spirits he would not mind having another 1,100 if it might again be followed by a fine time in the hospital!

I heard of others laughing at the birch. But there is yet one thing they fear, and that is a whip called the "*troichatka*," or "*plète*." I forewarn the reader that the treatment of this subject may harrow his feelings; yet, if a writer is to present a true picture of what has come under his observation, he must delineate not only the lights of his picture but the shadows also. The author of "Tom Brown's School Days," when about to describe a fight at Rugby, recommends any of his readers who feel particularly sensitive to skip the

hapter; and I venture to give similar advice with egard to the next few paragraphs.

The knout, as already said, has been abolished for ome years, notwithstanding the persistent introduction f this instrument into the pages of some of the vin- lictive class of writers on Russian affairs. I found it ad been discontinued sufficiently long to make it ifficult for me to get an explanation of what it used o be like. M. Pietrowski, in his "Story of a Siberian Exile," De Lagny, and one or two other writers of his lass, do their very best to invest the knout with every orror, and to make it appear that a long strip of flesh as torn off the culprit's back at every stroke. A nore trustworthy account is that of M. Andreoli, which am the more disposed to believe, because it agrees retty accurately with the description of the instru- nent given me by an old man who had seen it used t Chita. The Russian post-drivers still use for their orses what they call a "knout," which is a short hip like a heavy English hunting-whip, only that the ash consists of three or four pieces of twisted hide inked together continuously by metal rings. It makes formidable instrument even for driving a horse. But n comparing this with our two descriptions, I make o doubt that the genuine knout for criminals was a omewhat similar whip to that now employed some- mes for horses. M. Andreoli gives it a handle from ne to two inches in diameter, and 9 inches in length. t the top of the handle is a ring, then a lash of raw ide 18 inches long, with a ring at the end; then a econd lash and ring; and thirdly came the part hich is the "knout" proper, namely, a flat lash of ard leather, 21 inches long, bent to a curve and

ending with a hook something like the beak of a bird —the entire length of handle and lash being $2\frac{1}{2}$ *arshines* or nearly 6 feet. The instrument used to be wielded by a convict, who received his liberty or certain privileges for doing this work. I heard from a lawyer that the public flagellator in Moscow was so skilful in the manipulation of his weapon, that he could with it snip a cigarette off a window without breaking the glass or at a single blow break an inch board, and, therefore, the spine of a man's back. He was said to have found his profession so lucrative that, when his daughter married, he gave her a dowry of 60,000 roubles, at that time equal to, say, £9,000. He made his money from those he flogged. The law demanded that the person to be beaten should receive a certain number of stripes, but did not exact that the recipient should suffer; and thus, when well paid, this hero let the knout fall lightly—so, at least, the story goes.

The "*troichatka*," or "*plète*," is a whip of twisted hide, fastened to a handle 10 inches long and an inch thick. The lash, about the same thickness at the top as the handle, tapers for 12 inches, and then divides in three smaller lashes, 25 inches long, and about the size of the little finger, the whole measuring 4 feet in length, and weighing nearly 15 ounces. M. Pietrowski represents the plète as consisting of "three thongs weighted at the ends with balls of lead." The balls of lead, however, if I mistake not, are a piece of invention to harrow the feelings. At all events, none of those I saw (and I saw a boxful) had anything attached to the lashes, nor did they need it, for the instrument is quite severe enough in itself. From 20 to 50 lashes is the number usually given, though

hey may go up to 100. The criminal is bound to thick board, wide at the top and narrowed towards he bottom, called a *kobyla*, or "mare," which, by neans of an iron leg, is made to incline at an angle f about 30 degrees. At the upper end of the board re three places hollowed out to receive in the centre he face and head, and on either side the hands, all hich are bound down with leather thongs. A little ower and at either side are two iron loops, which confine he arms, whilst the feet are secured at the bottom. t an execution (for such as described to me by eye-witnesses it almost amounts to) a medical man and ome of the authorities must be present. The convict executioner takes three or more plètes, and, having tretched them to render them supple, takes up his osition about 10 yards distant, walks quickly to secure momentum, and brings down the lash with full orce on the lower part of the culprit's back. This e repeats two or three times, letting the lash fall in he same place. Then he walks from the other side, o as to bring it down in a different direction, and, fter a few strokes, changes his whip and walks from a hird point, the strokes thus falling upon the man omething in the shape of a star or an asterisk. M. Andreoli intimates that the flagellator is often ribed by the culprit or his friends, in which case e brings down the first blow with terrible severity, making the poor creature writhe and scream horribly, but then diminishes the force of his blows as he proceeds; whereas, if he be not bribed, he begins gently and gradually increases in severity, which is far worse. He has, however, to be wary, for if he does not strike hard enough he is threatened with twenty-

five stripes for himself, which were given the summer before my visit to an executioner in Nikolaefsk. Most descriptions of this punishment represent the culprit's back as raw, and running with blood—and it is better for the man when this is the case. A skilful flagellator draws little or no blood, and more pain is caused when the skin simply rises in wales; but, when this is the case, mortification sometimes sets in, and the prisoner speedily dies. One thus thrashed in the morning had died at night during the week preceding that in which I received my information.

Before passing from this dreadful subject I wish to make quite clear what was told me: that no man for the first offence can, by Russian law, be condemned to corporal punishment. Also I was given to understand, by a legal authority, that the plète exists only at three places in Siberia—Kara, Nikolaefsk, and Sakhalin, (though I was informed by a released exile that he saw it, 15 years ago, at Chita, and nearly everywhere,) so that only the very worst criminals ever see it at all. If they were moderate offenders they would not be so far east, and those who get it have usually gone through deportation, prison, and irons, and yet remain incorrigible. Also it should be remembered that in these localities the inhabitants are few, and are surrounded by hundreds of convicts or ex-convicts; that a very large proportion of the women-servants, and men-servants too, are of the same class, some of them not having even finished their terms; and that, in addition to these ex-prisoners, who are supposed to be corrected and better behaved, a considerable number of the worst characters are constantly escaping. More than 100 escaped from Sakhalin, I was told, the winter before

ny visit. When free, they make for Nikolaefsk to scape starvation, caring little what they do. In 1877 hree convicts, to get the paltry sum of £12, brutally illed a woman and put her down a well. Hence the nhabitants say that, were they not defended by some very strong deterrents, they would not be safe a noment, since, if a man commit half-a-dozen murders, ne knows he is not to be hanged.

I have thus forced myself to mention all the kinds of punishment, painful as some of them are, that came under my observation or to my knowledge in Siberia; and I have done so in part because I desired to leave no room for uneasy suspicions that aught had been kept back from the reader. Moreover, I should not think it right to contradict the many false statements which have appeared from time to time concerning the punishment of Siberian exiles without giving a picture of things as I really found them.

On the whole, my conviction is that, if a Russian exile behaves himself decently well, he may in Siberia be more comfortable than in many, and as comfortable as in most, of the prisons of the world. There are yet other points to be mentioned in connection with Siberian prisons, but these can be best treated of as we visit, in succession, the various towns in which they are situated.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OBI.

Dimensions of river.—Its tributaries.—Province of Tobolsk.—Geographical features.—Population.—Voguls.—Samoyedes.—Intemperance.—Commercial prospects of Obi.—Siberian produce.—Corn land.—Timber.—Cost of provisions.—Carriage.—Discoveries of Wiggins.—Followed by Nordenskjold.—Ship-building at Tiumen.—Navigation of Kara Sea.—Books on basin of Obi.

THE Obi is one of the largest rivers of the Old Continent, and seems destined to play an important part in opening up to commerce the immense wealth of Western Siberia. Something, therefore, should be said of this enormous stream, and the province of Tobolsk through which it flows. The basin of the river contains more than a million and a quarter of square miles; an area nearly 2,000 miles in length, and, at the widest part, 1,200 in breadth.* This vast

* The principal branch of the Obi is the Irtish, which, rising in Mongolia, passes through Lake Zaizang, about 1,720 feet above the sea level. It then passes Ustkammenogorsk, in the Altai region, where it becomes navigable, and, flowing on to Omsk, is subsequently joined by the Ishim and the Tobol, which last is made up of the Isset, Tura, and Tavda, the last three descending from the watershed of the Urals. The Obi proper rises in Siberia, and runs with a rapid course through the northern ridges of the Altai mountains, amid scenery resembling in beauty and grandeur that of the Lake of Lucerne. It is joined north of Tomsk by the Tom and the Tchulim, and then it flows on in a western course, swelled by many minor streams, to its junction with the Irtish, in the 60th parallel. Before reaching the Tom the current becomes gentle and allows of easy navigation, especially in spring, when water is abundant

area is covered with a network of streams, navigable from the Arctic Ocean to the best parts of Western Siberia, the importance of which can hardly be over-estimated, when it is borne in mind that the success of recent enterprise has demonstrated the possibility of carrying produce by water to Europe.

But let us now speak of the province, inhabitants, and aborigines of Tobolsk, which, though not the largest, is at once the oldest and by far the most populous of the governments of Siberia. It extends from the frozen ocean down to the 55th parallel, a distance of 1,200 miles from north to south, and of 700 miles in its widest part from east to west, its total area covering 800,000 square miles—a country, that is to say, seven times as large as Great Britain and Ireland. The surface, save where the western border approaches the Urals, is flat—so flat, indeed, that Tobolsk, which is 550 miles from the sea, is only 378 feet above its level. It has no large lakes, but there are several small ones, from which salt is obtained.*

but, in approaching the Irtish, shoals become numerous. The Obi then takes a northerly course, and frequently divides as it traverses an alluvial and low plain from 40 to 50 miles wide, the greater part of which, after winter, is inundated. This enormous river, having now a course of 2,700 miles, falls into the Obi Gulf, which is 400 miles long, and from 70 to 80 miles wide. For a large part of the year the water flows under ice, which at Tiumen is from 3 to 4 feet, and on the gulf is 7 feet, thick.

* There are nine uyezds in the province, and among its prominent towns are Turinsk and Tiumen, on the Tura; Kurgan and Yalutorofsk on the Tobol; Ishim, on the river of that name; and Tara, on the Irtish; together with Surgut, Berezov, and Obdorsk, on the Lower Obi; whilst the capital town of the government is Tobolsk. Hoppe's Almanack for 1880 gives the population at 1,102,302, but the Almanack for 1878 gives a smaller number, which represents an earlier census, and is mentioned here only for the purpose of giving the reader some idea of the social position of the inhabitants, who in 1870 were classified thus: hereditary nobles, 404; personally noble, 3,025; ecclesiastical persons (which includes not only all grades of clergy, but also their families), 3,045; a town

Ethnographically considered, the province is not so varied as some others, the people being for the most part Russians, Tatars, Voguls, Ostjaks, or Samoyedes; the Tatars belonging to the Turkish, and the Voguls and Ostjaks to the Finnish stock. Some writers classify the Samoyedes as Finns, but Mr. Howorth considers they should be treated as a race apart. Mr. Rae, in his "Land of the North Wind," and Mr. Seebohm, in his "Siberia in Europe," have recently given interesting information concerning the Samoyedes.

The Voguls inhabit a district which coincides pretty closely with the ridge of the Northern Urals, and were estimated in 1876 at 5,000 in number. Their country makes them hillmen and foresters, for they lie within the northern limit of the fir and birch, in the country of the wolf, the bear, the sable, the glutton, the marten, the beaver, and the elk. They usually dress like the Russians, and live by hunting, for they have no plains for the breeding of cattle, and no climate for agriculture. They are said to use no salt. Their villages are scattered and small, consisting of from four to eight cabins. Obdorsk is their trading town. To this town, on the Arctic circle at the mouth of the Obi, come also the Samoyedes and Ostjaks, of which latter I shall speak as I saw them further east.

The Samoyedes inhabit a larger tract of country, stretching along the shore of the frozen ocean from the north-east corner of Europe, all across the Tobolsk government to the Yenesei, descending to the region of the Ostjaks, and on some parts of the southern border

population of 30,000, and a rural population of 436,000. To this must be added a military force of 50,000, 25 foreigners, and an aboriginal and mixed population of 142,000; the exact total of which then amounted to 666,890.

to Tomsk. With the Samoyedes I felt already in a measure acquainted, partly by correspondence from my friend in Finland, and partly by a near approach to them in 1878, when I travelled to Archangel. Their numbers were estimated, in 1876, at 5,700. Their riches consist of herds of reindeer, which they pasture on the mosses of the vast bogs or *tundras*, from which the animals in winter scrape the snow with their feet, and thus find their sustenance. To the Samoyede the reindeer is everything; when alive, the animal draws his sledge, and, when dead, its flesh is eaten and the skin used for tent and clothing.

At Archangel I bought a *sovik* or tunic, a cap, and a wonderful pair of Samoyede boots; and as the Samoyede manner of dressing resembles in its main features that of other northern aborigines in Siberia, I may as well describe it particularly. In winter, then, to be in the (Samoyede) fashion, one should dress as follows:—First a pair of short trousers made of softened reindeer skin, fitting tight, and reaching down to the knee. Then stockings of *peshki*, the skin of young fawns, with the hair inwards. Next come the boots, called *poumé leepte*, which means boot-stockings, reaching almost to the thigh, the sole being made of old and hard reindeer hide, the hair pointing forward to diminish the possibility of slipping on the ice or snow. Common boots have the hair only on the outside. Mine are a gay "lady's" pair, lined inside with the softest fur, and made of white reindeer skin without, sewn with stripes of darker skin, and ornamented in front with pieces of coloured cloth. The clothing of the lower limbs being completed, one must work one's way from the bottom to the top of the tunic, or *sovik*, which has an opening to put the

head through, and is furnished with sleeves. Mine has a high straight collar, but in some brought by Mr. Seebohm from the Yenesei this collar rises behind above the top of the head. The costume is completed by a

MY SAMOYEDE DRESS.

cap of reindeer skin, with strings on either side ornamented with pieces of cloth. The hair of the *sovik* is worn outside in fine weather, and inside when it rains; but when prolonged exposure to cold is apprehended, a second garment, called a "*gus*," is worn, with the hair outside, and a close-fitting hood, leaving exposed

only a small portion of the face. The Ostjaks are said to have at the end of the sleeve a glove or mitten, made of the hardest hide of the reindeer, and suitable for heavy work, and also a slit under the wrist to allow of the fingers being put through for finer work. A girdle is worn round the loins, over which the *sovik* laps a little, and thus forms a pocket for small articles.

SAMOYEDES OF ARCHANGEL.

I have been told, by one well acquainted with the Samoyedes, that it is often very difficult to trade with them before giving a glass of *vodka*, and that, when once given, they are irrepressible in clamouring for more. Men may sometimes be seen who have brought in their wares to barter for winter necessaries, and who will exchange the whole for spirits, and reduce themselves to beggary. This has caused the Russian Government to forbid the sale of spirits

in these northern regions, but the traders smuggle them in.*

I must not forget to add that some pleasing accounts of the honesty of the Samoyedes and Ostjaks were related to us. The merchants of Tobolsk, for instance, when they go north in the summer to purchase fish, take with them flour and salt, place them in their summer stations, and, on their return, leave unprotected what remains for the following year. Should a Samoyede pass by and require it, he does not scruple to take what he wants, but he leaves in its place an I.O.U., in the form of a duplicate stick, duly notched, to signify that he is a debtor; and then, in the fishing season, he comes to his creditor, compares the duplicate

* We heard from other sources that for brandy these aborigines will sell everything short of their souls, and even these would appear sometimes to tremble in the balance, if the following story be true :—A Russian priest, it seemed, intent upon adding sheep to his fold, even though by very questionable means, sometimes gave drink to the Samoyedes and Ostjaks, and, when they were in a muddled condition, baptized them, put round their necks the cross, and thus brought them into the fold of the orthodox Russian Church. On coming to their senses they sometimes objected to what had been done, but, like the recruit who took the Queen's shilling, they were caught, and the only way to escape was to bribe the priest to erase their names from his register, and let them go. This was told us by a man who had lived in the Samoyede country. The story presented such a *bathos* of proselytizing zeal, that I asked particularly if it were really true, and was answered in the affirmative. In the time of the Emperor Nicholas, zealous missionary priests received honours and decorations in proportion to the number of Pagans and Jews they baptized; but this, I believe, is not the case now. I heard, further east, of other questionable means taken by a priest to obtain proselytes from the aborigines of the Amur. This, however, was done by one who, during my stay in the town, publicly disgraced his cloth by intemperance. These enormities, therefore, must be laid to the account, not of the Russian Church, but to that of certain of its corrupt officials. They are mentioned here on the principle that not only the truth but the whole truth should be told; and, further, because I would fain not have to allude to the subject when I come hereafter to record better things, as I shall have to do, of the missionary efforts of the Russian Church in Siberia.

stick he has kept with the one he left behind, and discharges his obligation. Captain Wiggins also records that when, in the winter months of 1876-77, his ship the *Thames* was laid up in the Kureika, it was surrounded by hundreds of Ostjaks and other natives, but that nothing was stolen.

The difficulties of educating and Christianizing these wandering tribes are very great.* I heard, however, that in European Russia a priest is sent yearly to a town in the far north of the Archangel province, to baptize the children and marry such among the Samoyedes of that region as are professedly Christian. Reclus, however, speaks of the Yurak-Samoyedes as still practising their bloody rites, and thrusting pieces of raw flesh into the mouths of their idols. In 1877 the Russians opened a school at Obdorsk for the natives. We may hope, therefore, that for them better days are coming, both by reason of what the Russians are doing, and also, possibly and indirectly, by the efforts which certain Englishmen are making to invade the lands of these aborigines for the purposes of trade.

That the commercial value of the basin of the Obi and a large part of Western Siberia is not yet realized by European capitalists is the opinion of most of those that I have met who have been there. A limited

* In 1824 a commencement was made to translate into Samoyede the Gospel of St. Matthew, but it did not go on after 1826. The same gospel was translated some years ago into the language of the Ostjaks by the *protohierea*, or chief priest, at Obdorsk, and was forwarded to the Russian Bible Society, but not published; and, up to the present time, neither that nor any other part of the New Testament exists, as far as I know for the Samoyedes, Ostjaks, or Voguls.—Dr. Latham mentions 11 dialects in the Samoyede language, and refers to the work of Professor Castrén. who, about 30 years ago, studied closely the languages of the Finnish and Samoyede nations, and to whose labours we owe dictionaries of some of these tongues,—published after his death by Schiefner.

demand exists for English merchandise, and the possibility of an almost unlimited supply of products needed by England. The Altai mountains, for instance, are rich in silver, copper, and iron, which last is also

A YURAK-SAMOYEDE.

abundant in the valley of the Tom. But these are as nothing compared with grain, for the production of which the country is admirably fitted. From the southern border of the Tobolsk province, for 600 miles northward, lies a district of fertile black earth; and so

exclusively is it of this character in the valleys of many of the rivers, which overflow like the Nile, and leave a rich deposit, that the geologist finds it difficult to pick up even a few specimen pebbles. It is like a vast tract of garden land, well suited for the production of wheat, oats, linseed, barley, and other cereals. Farther north are prairies for cattle, and a wooded region, inhabited by various fur-bearing animals, where the pine, fir, and birch abound. These remarks apply to the valley of the Obi no less than to that of the Yenesei, where Mr. Seebohm found he could purchase a larch, 60 feet long, 3 feet diameter at the base, and 18 inches at the apex, for a sovereign, and that a hundred such could be had to order in a week. In the city of Tobolsk the cost of provisions, we were told, had advanced to five times what it was 30 years ago; but even so, the present price of meat was quoted at *2d.*, and rye flour at a halfpenny, per pound.* Again, north of the wooded region come the *tundras*, over

* The surprisingly small cost of provisions on the Obi will be referred to hereafter; but some idea may be formed, for the purposes of trade, of the cheapness of provisions, from the fact that a merchant told me that in 1877 he bought up meat at Tobolsk for less than ½*d.* per English pound, and that, more recently, he sold for the Petersburg market ten thousand brace of black grouse, capercailzie, and hazel grouse at *9d.* a pair all round. The cost for transporting from Tiumen to Petersburg is as follows: heavy goods, going by land where necessary, and floated on the rivers where possible, take 12 months in transit, and cost about *5s.* a cwt.; if, however, goods are sent by road to Nijni Novgorod, and thence forwarded by rail, they take 2½ months in transit, and cost up to *12s.* a cwt.; or, again, if goods are sent "express"—that is, put into large sledges, carrying each from a ton to a ton and a half, placed under charge of a man, and drawn by three horses, to Nijni Novgorod, and thence by rail—the transport costs *18s.* a cwt. Notwithstanding this heavy cost of carriage, however, the merchants at Tiumen can bring their fish from the mouth of the Obi, forward it to Petersburg, sell the sturgeon at *24s.*, and the *sterlet*, *nelma*, and *moksun* at *30s.* the cwt., and then secure a handsome profit for everybody concerned.

which roam the reindeer, wild and tame; and about 100 miles up the Kureika, which flows into the Yenesei, there is a valuable mine of graphite lying on the surface; besides which the rivers are so full of fish that the fishermen try not to catch too many, because of the frequent breaking of their nets.

These riches have long been known to the Siberians, to whom they were practically useless for export, by reason of expensive land carriage over the Urals; and the only other way of transit to Europe was through the Kara Sea, which was supposed to be ice-blocked perpetually. So far back as the sixteenth century, the English and the Dutch tried hard to penetrate the Siberian ocean, but were always stopped at Novaia Zemlia; so that for two centuries no fresh effort was made. Of late years, however, Captain Wiggins, of Sunderland, who, from his youth, appears to have been a bold and adventurous seaman, happened to read in Wrangell's "Polar Sea" that, three centuries ago, the Russians were wont to coast from Archangel, for purposes of trade, to Mangasee, on the Taz, near the gulf of the Obi; and it occurred to him that, if they could do it in their wretched "kotchkies," or boats of planking, fastened to a frame with thongs of leather, and calked with moss, he ought much more easily to be able to do so with the aid of steam. With his characteristic love of adventure, therefore, and at his own expense, he determined to make the attempt; and on June 3rd, 1874, he left Dundee in the *Diana*, a small steamer of only 104 tons. In little more than three weeks the Kara Sea was entered, and found free of ice; and the *Diana* entered the gulf of Obi on the 5th of August —the first sea-going vessel that had ever done so.

Circumstances did not permit of his ascending the river; he returned, therefore, paid off his crew, and employed the winter in making known the feasibility of the route. He found great difficulty, however, in persuading the mercantile world, and applied in vain to the Royal Geographical Society for help to follow up his discoveries. Whereupon there came forward another explorer to snatch the rose from the captain's hand; for Professor Nordenskjold, seeing what Wiggins had done,—amply supported by his Government, by private enterprise, and without cost to himself (as it should be)—followed next year through the Kara Sea, passed the Obi gulf, and entered the Yenesei, from whence, having sent back his ship, he returned overland to Petersburg. The feasibility of the sea-route was now manifest; and, as I passed through Tiumen, Messrs. Wardropper were building, at a distance of 700 miles from the ocean, two sea-going ships, for Messrs. Trapeznikoff and Co., of Moscow, to be floated down the Obi and round the North Cape to England.

It is the opinion of both navigators that "a regular sea communication between Siberia and Northern Europe, during a short season of the year, ought not to be attended with greater risks and dangers than seamen encounter on many other waters now visited by thousands of vessels." These are the sober words of Professor Nordenskjold; and to the same effect are the words spoken publicly by Captain Wiggins, in whom we have a brave and honest seaman, and concerning whose work England need only be ashamed that he received so little support. He has shown, however, by a voyage made in 1878, that steamers of any size, but of shallow draught, can go some 400 miles up the

Obi. On the 2nd of August he left Liverpool in the *Warkworth*, an ordinary steamer of 340 tons net register, chartered through Mr. Wm. Byford, of London, shipbroker, for sole account of Mr. Oswald Cattley, first guild merchant of Petersburg, with a miscellaneous cargo, and arrived in 15 days. He was met by lighters from the Barnaul district, with wheat, flax, etc., to load the steamer, and then convey inland the cargo from Liverpool. No mishap occurred on the outward voyage; but, in consequence of the Obi falling so rapidly, the steamer touched the ground on coming down the river. He arrived safely, however, in London on the 3rd of October; thus occupying two months on the passage out and home. Subsequent trading voyages have been attempted, some of which failed; but the causes of failure were such as may in future be overcome, the *Neptune* of Hamburg having made successful voyages in 1878 and 1880. It appears, then, that the trade only awaits further development,* and if, with specially strengthened steamers, the carriage of produce can thus be arranged between England and Siberia, both countries will doubtless be gainers thereby.†

* For further remarks on the commercial prospects of Western Siberia, see Appendix D.

† There are two books written by scientific explorers of the basin of the Obi, which it may be useful to mention for the sake of any who wish to study this part of Siberia. One is that of Adolph Erman, who, for the purpose of making magnetical observations, travelled in 1828 to Tobolsk, and then descended the river as far as Obdorsk; the second is the German work of Dr. Otto Finsch, who, from Tiumen, ascended the Irtish, in 1876, towards the Altai mountains, and then, turning north to Barnaul and Tomsk, followed the Obi to its mouth. Another class of books, written for the most part by returned exiles, throws more or less light upon Western Siberia, such as "The Exile of Kotzebue," published in 1802, and "Revelations of Siberia," by a banished lady, who spent a short time on the Lower Obi at Beresov.

CHAPTER IX.

TOBOLSK.

Early history of Siberia.—Yermak.—Conquest of the Tatars.—Tobolsk the first capital.—The exiled bell.—Our visit to the Governor.—Hard-labour prisons.—Interior arrangements.—"*Travaux forcés.*"—Testimony of prisoners.—Books presented.

TOBOLSK, for a long period, was the capital of the whole of Siberia. This will be a suitable place, therefore, in which to treat briefly the history of the Russian subjugation of the country at large. It can hardly be said that Siberia was familiar to the Russians before the middle of the sixteenth century ; for, although at an earlier period an expedition had penetrated as far as the Lower Obi, yet its effects were not permanent. Later, Ivan Vassilievitch II. sent a number of troops over the Urals, laid some of the Tatar tribes under tribute, and in 1558 assumed the title of "Lord of Siberia." Kutchum Khan, however, a lineal descendant of Genghis Khan, punished these tribes for their defection, and regained their fealty, and so ended again for a while the result of the Russian expedition. A third invasion, however, was made in a way quite unexpected. Ivan Vassilievitch II. had extended his conquests to the Caspian Sea, and opened commercial relations with Persia; but the merchants and caravans were frequently pillaged by hordes of banditti, called

Don Cossacks, whom the Tsar attacked, killing some and taking prisoner or scattering others. Among the dispersed were 6,000 freebooters, under the command of a chief named Yermak Timofeeff, who made their way to the banks of the Kama, to a settlement at Orel, belonging to one of the Stroganoffs, where they were entertained during a dreary winter, and where Yermak heard of an inviting field of adventure, lying on the other side of the Urals. Thither he determined to try his fortunes, and after an unsuccessful attempt in the summer of 1578, started again with 5,000 men in June of the next year. It was eighteen months before he reached the small town of Tchingi, on the banks of the Tura; by which time his followers had dwindled down, by skirmishes, privation, and fatigue, to 1,500 men. But they were all braves. Before them was Kutchum Khan, prince of the country, already in position, and, with numerous troops, resolved to defend himself to the last. When at length the two armies stood face to face, that of Yermak was further reduced to 500 men, nine-tenths of those who left Orel having perished. A desperate fight ensued, the Tatars were routed, and Yermak pushed on to Sibir, the residence of the Tatar princes. It was a small fortress on the banks of the Irtish, the ruins of which are still standing, and of which I have seen a photograph, if I mistake not, among Mr. Seebohm's collection.

Yermak was now suddenly transformed to a prince, but he had the good sense to see the precariousness of his grandeur, and it became plain that he must seek for assistance. He sent, therefore, fifty of his Cossacks to the Tsar of Muscovy, their chief being adroitly ordered to represent to the Court the progress which

the Russian troops, under the command of Yermak, had made in Siberia, where an extensive empire had been conquered in the name of the Tsar. The Tsar took very kindly to this, pardoned Yermak, and sent him money and assistance. Reinforced by 500 Russians, Yermak multiplied his expeditions, extended his conquests, and was enabled to subdue various insurrections fomented by the conquered Kutchum Khan. In one of these expeditions he laid siege to the small fortress of Kullara, which still belonged to his foe, and by whom it was so bravely defended that Yermak had to retreat. Kutchum Khan stealthily followed the Russians, and, finding them negligently posted on a small island in the Irtish, he forded the river, attacked them by night, and came upon them so suddenly as with comparative ease to cut them to pieces. Yermak perished, but not, it is said, by the sword of the enemy. Having cut his way to the water's edge, he tried to jump into a boat, but, stepping short, he fell into the water, and the weight of his armour carried him to the bottom. Thus perished Yermak Timofeeff, and when the news reached Sibir, the remainder of his followers retired from the fortress, and left the country.

The Court of Moscow, however, sent a body of 300 men, who before long made a fresh incursion, and reached Tchingi almost without opposition. There they built the fort of Tiumen, and re-established the Russian sovereignty. Being soon afterwards reinforced, they extended their operations, and built the fortresses of Tobolsk, Sungur, and Tara, and soon gained for the Tsar all the territory west of the Obi. The stream of conquest then flowed eastward apace. Tomsk was founded in 1604, and became the

Russian head-quarters, whence the Cossacks organized new expeditions. Yeneseisk was founded in 1619, and, eight years afterwards, Krasnoiarsk. Passing the Yenesei, they advanced to the shores of Lake Baikal, and in 1620 attacked and partly conquered the populous nation of the Buriats. Then, turning northwards to the basin of the Lena, they founded Yakutsk in 1632, and made subject, though not without considerable difficulty, the powerful nation of the Yakutes; after which they crossed the Aldan mountains, and in 1639 reached the Sea of Okhotsk. Thus in the span of a single lifetime—70 years—was added to the Russian crown a territory as large as the whole of Europe, whose ancient capital, as I have said, was Tobolsk.

The citadel and upper town stand on a hill, with a precipitous front, at the foot of which lies the lower town. The two are now connected by a winding carriage-road, but formerly the only entrance to the citadel was by a very steep incline through the fortress gates. From the top of the hill an extensive view is obtained of the Irtish, flowing close by the town to its junction with the Tobol. The town below is built with regularity, and contains many churches and monasteries. The houses are chiefly of wood, and the streets are paved with the same material. But the glory of Tobolsk has long been waning, and, when this is the case with a Siberian town, wooden roadways degenerate into a delusion and a snare. They rot and remain unrepaired, and one is in danger at night of tumbling into holes. The population of the town consists mainly of Russians, Tatars, and Germans, and in it are manufactured leather, tallow, soap, tiles, boats, and firearms.

In the upper part of the town are some handsome

churches, and a cathedral, near which is the famous bell from Uglitch, that was exiled by Boris Gudonoff because it gave signal to the insurrectionists. On their being quelled, the unfortunate bell was deposed, had two of its ears broken off, was publicly flogged, and sent to Siberia and forbidden for ever to ring again. But the ban has since been removed, and it now is hung, not in a belfry, but alone, and assists in calling the people to church.

Not far from the fortress are the pleasure-gardens, and also the three hard-labour prisons, which we wished particularly to see. My letter was therefore presented to M. Lisagorsky, the Governor, who immediately sent for the police-master; and we proceeded at once to visit our first hard-labour prisons in Siberia. For many years Tobolsk was a principal place of punishment, and even now prisoners condemned to the east frequently spend 'ere the first portion of their time. On the road we had heard it spoken of as a place of considerable severity, in which were kept those condemned to "travaux forcés." On entering, therefore, I braced my nerves for such horrors as might present themselves. The authorities seemed determined that the prisoners should not harm us (or them?); for, as we moved from ward to ward and section to section, there followed us four soldiers with fixed bayonets. The buildings were large and of brick, with double windows to keep out the cold; and I noticed that, in addition to a pillow and covering, mattresses stuffed with old clothes were also provided for the prisoners. These, I presume, were furnished by the local committee. They had a few books, and as one man only in ten could read, it was usual during

the evenings for these to read aloud to their less instructed fellows. I saw a copy of the "Lives of the Saints" in one room, but no Bibles. The guard-room for the military was furnished much the same as the prisoners' rooms. There were likewise other wards of various sizes: one for murderers, having five occupants (most of whom, we were told, had committed their crimes in fits of drunkenness); another for eight men without passports; and other rooms for thieves. One was occupied by a man who had run away, and another by a man who, for selling things belonging to an altar, had been found guilty of sacrilege.

In the first prison were nine single cells, in one of which was a Polish doctor, a political offender, who had surrounded himself with such small comforts as Polish books, eau-de-Cologne, and cigarettes, which last *he* (by way of privilege) was allowed to smoke. One or two cells were set apart for punishment.

After marching through room after room, corridor after corridor, now across yards with prisoners lolling about, and now through sleeping apartments, where some were not even up, though breakfast-time had long gone by, I began to wonder where the *work* was going on, and asked to be shown the labours of those condemned to "travaux forcés"; upon which we were taken first into a room for wheelwrights, and next into a blacksmith's shop. Then we were introduced to a company of tailors, and another of shoemakers, and last of all we saw a room fitted for joiners or cabinet-makers' work. The amount of labour going on appeared to be exceedingly small, and the number of men employed (or apparently that could be employed) to be only a sprinkling of the 732 inmates in prisons

Nos. 1 and 3, and 264 in prison No. 2. I believe some reason was given why more were not at work, though whether it was a holiday or bathing-day, or what, I forget; but I came to the conclusion that they had not appliances enough to find occupation for 1,000 prisoners, and that one need not have come to Siberia to see the severity of a hard-labour prison, since the same might just as easily have been witnessed in Europe. Had I entered with any of the curiosity that takes people to the chamber of horrors at Madame Tussaud's, such curiosity would certainly have remained ungratified. The prisons of Tobolsk reminded me most of those I had seen in Vienna and Cracow, in which, however, in some respects, a comparison would result in favour of Siberia; for at Cracow the convicts had not only to work at the bench by day, but, if my memory does not fail me, to sleep on it at night. At Tobolsk a set portion of labour is imposed daily; but when this is done, the prisoner is at liberty to work for himself. Various specimens of their handicraft were shown to us.

Prison No. 2 contained criminals who were sentenced to terms ranging from one year to the whole of life, and who, when liberated, were to be sent east to live like colonists. I do not know to whom the credit of superiority is due, whether to the governor of the province, the governor of the prison, or the local committee; but I was struck with the fact when I subsequently asked two prisoners who had been deported across Siberia, as to which prison west of Irkutsk they thought, from their point of view, the best, they both mentioned that of Tobolsk. We left with the governor of this province nearly 500 Scripture portions,

such as copies of the Gospels, Psalms, and the New Testament in Russian, Polish, German, French, and Tatar, together with 400 copies of the illustrated *Russian Workman*, and 1,000 tracts, his Excellency kindly undertaking to distribute the papers and tracts in the schools, and in the best way he could through the province generally, and to place the books for permanent use, not in the libraries, but within reach of each person in every room of every prison, hospital, poor-house, or similar institution under his administration. Having made these arrangements, committed them to paper in the form of a letter, and delivered it to the governor on the Monday evening, we awaited the arrival of the steamer to take us to Tomsk.

CHAPTER X.

FROM TOBOLSK TO TOMSK.

The steamer *Beljetchenko*.—Fellow-passengers.—Card-playing.—Cost of provisions.—Inspection of convicts' barge.—An exile fellow-passenger.—Obi navigation.—The Ostjaks.—Their fisheries.—Feats of archery.—Marriage customs.

THE Siberians are rich in time. Days to them are of little consequence; hours of no moment. With them "Time is *not* money." "What difference," said a coachman at Ekaterineburg to a friend of mine for whom he had lost his train, "what difference one way or other could an hour make, or for that matter *two* hours either?" Moreover, the arrival and departure of steamers are not announced by a.m. and p.m., but the date simply is given; and of course you are expected to be in readiness to start at any moment of the twenty-four hours. We deemed it unsafe, therefore, to sleep at the hotel on Monday night, the 2nd of June, lest we should be left behind; so, getting our tarantass and luggage on the pier, I crept inside the vehicle, and there spent the early part of the night, till, at dawn, the steamer arrived. For a Siberian steamer, the *Beljetchenko*, belonging to Messrs. Kourbatoff and Ignatoff, was good, and her dimensions, compared with others upon which I subsequently travelled, were large. She was a paddle-boat, with

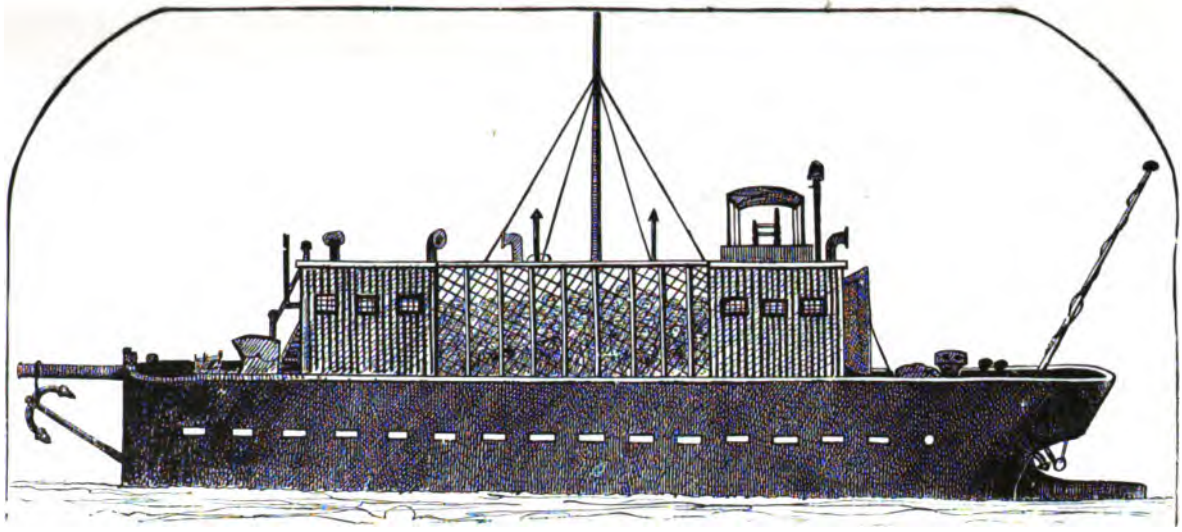
fore-cabins and saloons for first-class passengers, and after-cabins for those of the second class, whilst the deck was allotted to a considerable number of third-class passengers and discharged soldiers who were "homeward bound." All told, the passengers, I should imagine, could not have counted less than from 100 to 150. Among those of the first class were some pleasant people, such as officers of the army, navy, and gend-armerie, and a few school girls going home for summer holidays from Petersburg, a distance of 3,000 miles. There were specimens also of the ubiquitous Russian merchant, travelling on business. Our first impressions of these travellers were unfavourable. Some of the gentlemen were taking leave, if I mistake not, at Tobolsk, of friends, and this event is usually accompanied in Siberia with the drinking of a great deal of wine; so that, when one of the naval officers came to take his place in the sleeping saloon, he was in a condition "unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." We were spared further inconvenience of this kind by the captain, who had received injunctions from one of the proprietors, Mr. Ignatoff, to look after "Mr. Missionary," as the captain insisted upon calling me, and on which I did not undeceive him. For the payment of three second-class fares he gave us for sleeping the second-class ladies' cabin—intended for five persons—in which we were comfortable enough at night, whilst we sat where we pleased by day. The captain was also instructed to charge £2 instead of £4 for the carriage of our tarantass, and also to deal leniently with our heavy excess of baggage and books. As our voyage lasted several days, it was not a matter for surprise that time hung heavily upon the

hands of some of the passengers, but I was hardly prepared for the amount of card-playing with which much of it was killed. In no country that I have visited have I seen a tenth part of the card-playing that I witnessed in Siberia. The Russian Government exercises a monopoly in the manufacture of playing-cards, the profits being applied to the support of the Foundling Hospital at Moscow, and 110 tons of cards are annually carried on the Petersburg-Moscow railway. I am told that the amount of card-playing in European Russia also is very considerable; that there are clubs in Petersburg where the gambling is frightful. As for our fellow-passengers, there was a clique who played by day and quarrelled by night, and sometimes did not leave off their games till seven in the morning. By the time the journey was five days old, £20 had been lost by a young officer, who told me that in the small towns of the interior, in which soldiers are quartered, where there is little congenial society and nothing to do, card-playing is the daily constant resource of the officers. The habit, moreover, is not confined to men, but is indulged in, though apparently in a less degree, by women also. On board the steamer the game was not accompanied by excessive drinking, and, happily, several of the passengers—especially the ladies—spoke French, and a few could read English, so that in their society we passed an agreeable time.

The fares for travelling and the charges for provisions were low. The three second-class tickets for the whole journey of 8 days cost only £4, and for a dinner of 4 or 5 courses—soup, fish, meat, game, and pastry,—only 2*s.* were charged. I remembered this tariff with a sigh in California, where the price was

double for a meal not half so good, with wretched attendance into the bargain. It must be confessed, however, that provisions on the river's bank were extremely cheap—so cheap that one almost hesitates to put it on paper. At Surgut I was offered a pair of ducks for 2½*d.*; 10 brace of *riabchiks*, a sort of grouse about the size of a partridge, cost 1*s.*; a couple of fish called *yass*, weighing, I supposed, 1½ lb. each, were offered for 1½*d.*; and 10 large fish, as a lot, for ¼*d.* each. At Juchova I was offered for 5*d.* a couple of pike, weighing probably 20 lbs., and a live duck for 1½*d.*; whilst at the villages in the district we passed, which are not easily accessible, a young calf, I was told, could be bought for 6*d.*

As we ploughed along, there was tugged at our stern a barge laden with convicts, to which Dr. Johnson's definition of a ship as "a prison afloat" would with accuracy apply. The barge was a large floating hull, called the *Irtish*, 245 feet long, and 30 feet beam, 11 feet high from the keel to the deck, with a 4-feet water-line. It was made expressly for the transport of convicts, of whom it was intended to carry 800, with 22 officers. Below it was fitted with platforms for sleeping, like those described in the jails, whilst at either end of the craft were deck-houses eight feet high, containing a small hospital, an apothecary's shop, and apartments for the officers and soldiers in charge. The space between the deck-houses was roofed over, and the sides closed by bars and wires, painfully suggestive of a menagerie, or reminding one of the cage-cells in the old jail at Edinburgh. The vessel had neither masts nor engines, and bore a pretty close resemblance to a child's Noah's ark. At one of our



THE "IRTISH," A CONVICT BARGE ON THE OBI.

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stoppages I was trying to make a sketch of this unique craft, when the officer came and invited me to inspect it. We therefore went on board, with hands and pockets full of reading matter for distribution; and if the bars were suggestive of a menagerie, so, I must add, was the mode in which the occupants received our literary food. Not that they were rude, but so delighted were they with the pictures, and so eager to get the papers that contained them, that we found it hard work to hold our own. We had afterwards an opportunity of testing the value in money of this apparent eagerness for reading material. In former years I had always *given* both Scriptures and tracts. This year it was urged, and I think rightly, that it is better, when possible, to sell them. To offer them, however, for money to convicts seemed almost a mockery. Nevertheless we tried it, and requested the officer to let us know how many prisoners would like to give $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ for a copy of the New Testament, or the Book of Psalms. To my surprise he came at a subsequent stopping-place, bringing the money for 44 copies, and said that one man was in such haste to get his book that he had been to him three times to ask for it. As we proceeded on our course, and, looking back, saw the broad keel of the barge ploughing its way after us, one could not help feeling for its strange freight, and the many heavy hearts that were being tugged along further and further from the dear place called "home." But such thoughts received little enlargement at the halting-places, when the barge was drawn up to the bank; for the hilarity thereon of men, women, and children was much more noisy than that of the free people on the steamer. One might have thought that the con-

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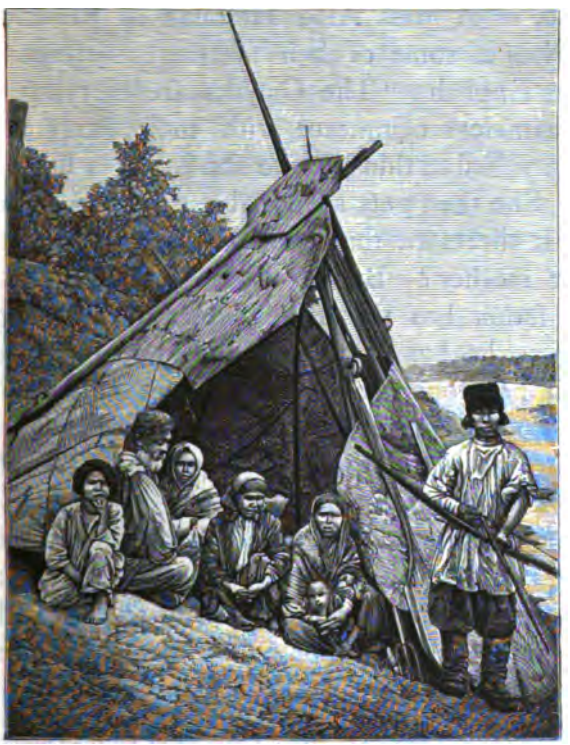
having caught the fish in summer, they put them in ponds till the approach of winter. They are then taken out and frozen, and in this condition sent as *fresh* fish a journey of 2,000 miles to Petersburg.* A large quantity of dried fish is also forwarded from the Obi to the great fair of Nijni Novgorod. Furs and hides likewise are sent there from the northern part of the province, together with rye, barley, oats, and buckwheat from the south.

Nothing, however, that we saw on the banks was more interesting perhaps than the aborigines, especially the Ostjaks, some of whom appeared paddling in their tiny canoes, and stealthily gliding among the bushes as the steamer approached. The Ostjaks inhabit a tract of country on either side of the Irtish and Obi, extending as far north as Obdorsk, on the south to Tobolsk, and nearly as far east as Narim. There is also a territory over which they roam on the left bank of the Yenesei below Turukhansk, though Mr. Howorth thinks that these are miscalled Ostjaks, being really Samoyedes. Their numbers are estimated at 24,000. They have no towns or villages, though they sometimes settle among the Russians. We saw on the banks the frames of some of their *yourts*, or tents, though the people were just then driven by the floods

* The fish of the Obi are generally pike, perch, bleak, and a kind of red mullet, and are of less importance than the migratory fish from the sea. These are chiefly the sturgeon, the *nelma*, and *muksum*, several kinds of salmon, and the herring. In the first weeks of June, when the ice breaks up, they commence their ascent of the river, avoiding the rapid parts, the quick swimmers soon getting ahead of the rest: 30 miles below Obdorsk they form shoals, and have all passed in a week, by which time, 150 miles higher, the quickest salmon arrive. The nelma comes two days later, but the sturgeon not till five days afterwards. Erman reckons this annual migration of fish to be at the lowest computation 26,000,000.

RUSSIANIZED OSTJAKS. *Page* 125.

to higher ground. In the neighbourhood of the Obi they possess no reindeer; their wealth consists of boats, fishing-tackle, clothes, and utensils; and a nomad Ostjak who possesses goods to the value of £10 is deemed a rich man. In this district they have



OSTJAKS ON THE OBI, IN SUMMER YOURT.

ceased to wear their native costume, and are become more or less Russianized; but the Ostjaks of the Yenesei still dress in the costume of their forefathers. These people are short of stature, with dark hair and eyes, and flat faces; in complexion and general appearance those we saw were not much unlike some of the Siberians. They live principally by fishing

and the chase, and are very skilful in the use of the bow. In shooting squirrels, for instance, they use a blunt arrow, and take care to hit the animal on the head, so as not to damage the fur.*

I had heard of these aboriginals, before leaving England, from Miss Alba Hellman in Finland. who thus writes of some of their marriage customs in expressive English: "The Ostjaks are carrying on the most shameless commerce with their daughters. A girl is a valuable thing while she is yet in her parents' home. She then gets all possible care and protection. But is it therefore that she may be a good daughter, wife, or mother? By no means for that cause: an Ostjak father has the same object in his daughter's feeding as he has in feeding his animals. Well fed, she will not long stay at home without the father getting good payment for her. The price of an ordinary wife was at the river Irtish (on the Obi the price is higher), first, from £20 to £30 in money; next, a horse, a cow, and an ox; then from 7 to 10 pieces of clothing; and lastly, a pood of meal, a few hops, and a measure of brandy for the wedding feast. And when a man cannot afford to pay all these things, he often steals the girl. So says Professor Castrén."

* Their bows are 6 feet long, with a diameter of an inch and a quarter in the middle, and are made of a slip of birch joined by fish-glue to a piece of hard pine-wood. The arrows are 4 feet long, the head consisting of either a ball for shooting small fur animals, or an iron spear-like head for killing larger game. The bows are exceedingly powerful, and the archers wear on the left forearm a strong bent plate of horn to deaden the blow of the string. We heard of feats of archery accomplished by them which far outdo the traditional deed of William Tell. Our captain told a lady on board that on one occasion he saw an Ostjak mark an arrow in the middle with a piece of charcoal and discharge it in the air, whilst a second man, before it reached the ground, shot at the descending shaft and struck it on the mark.

CHAPTER XI.

TOMSK.

The province of Tomsk.—The city of Tomsk.—Visit to the Governor.—The prison. — Institution for prisoners' children. — A Lutheran minister.—Finnish colonies in Siberia.—Their pastoral care.—Dissuaded from visiting Minusinsk.—Distribution of Finnish books.—*Détour* to Barnaul.

THE province of Tomsk is, in some respects, the most favoured in Siberia. It is not so huge and unwieldy as some of the others, and does not, like its two neighbours of Tobolsk and Yeneseisk, extend to the Frozen Sea; but, beginning on the 62nd parallel for its northernmost boundary, it continues southward as far as the borders of Mongolia, from which it is separated by the Altai mountains. The climate is good, and the land is valuable for agricultural purposes, while the mountainous districts are exceedingly rich in minerals.*

The city of Tomsk is situated on the river Tom,

* It is the most populous province of Siberia after that of Tobolsk, and contains 838,000 inhabitants. Another reference to Hoppe's Almanack shows the vast preponderance of its rural population over that of other provinces, and shows also a large population of the upper classes, many of whom, doubtless, are descendants of noble exiles. In 1875 the number of hereditary nobles in the province was 2,400; ecclesiastical persons, 4,000; town population, 4,400; and rural population, 725,000; whilst the military forces numbered 30,000; foreigners, 48; and the mixed races (chiefly Tatars, Teleuti, and Altai Kalmucs) numbered 130,000, the population being spread over an area of half a million square miles—a

whence it derives its name, and has a population of 30,000. Its streets are wide but steep, and in the centre of the town is a good specimen of that prominent feature in so many Russian towns—a *Gostinnoi Dvor* (bazaar or market). It is an aggregation of shops and open spaces, to which the stranger is constantly sent for anything he may require. If a countrywoman has butter or milk to sell, she takes up her position there: so do hucksters with small wares. Larger establishments are to be found elsewhere, but the *Gostinnoi Dvor* of a Russian town contains a concentration of goods that supplies all wants. Many of the houses at Tomsk are of brick; it boasts of several hotels, two banks, and two photographers. In a distant part of the town is an imposing building, the law courts, etc., also a large church or cathedral, which is still unfinished.

We called upon M. Sooproonenko, the Governor, who was very obliging, and sent us at once to see the two prisons, in one of which criminals are kept, whilst in the other they only stay whilst passing through to their destinations. The condition of prison affairs in Tomsk showed that there was an active local committee. The jail in which criminals are permanently confined is a heavy brick building, with low, vaulted corridors, in which prisoners may be kept for terms varying from one month to four years. The authorities complained that in winter it is damp. This was one of the few prisons where there was a school, which such prisoners as chose might attend; but out of 640, when we

territory bigger than any two countries in Europe except Russia. The government is divided into six uyezds. It has seven prisons and four large hospitals. The principal towns are Barnaul, Kainsk, Biisk, Kuznetsk, Marinsk, Narim, and Tomsk, which last is the capital and residence of the Governor.

were there, only 30 did so. Among those confined was an old man who had been condemned to hard labour further east, but on his way his penalty had been mitigated, and he allowed to stay at Tomsk. There was some little show of work going on in the shoemakers', carpenters', and blacksmiths' shops; but the great mass of the prisoners was herded in rooms where they had nothing to do. When invited by the Governor to point out any defects I had noticed, I mentioned, first, that I thought all should work. He replied that they have no laws to compel them (I presume he spoke of a certain *class* of prisoners), and that the severest punishment they are allowed to inflict is three days' solitude with bread and water. We saw so many prisons in Siberia in which the majority of the prisoners had nothing to do, that the sight became wearisome; and when the authorities told us that they could not find them work, I was vain enough inwardly to say, "It strikes me that *I* could." But on reaching San Francisco, I altered my mind when inspecting a prison managed on modern principles, where they can manufacture in a day more than a thousand doors, to say nothing of hundreds of other articles of wood, leather, iron, and I know not what; and yet, even there, they had men condemned to hard labour twirling their thumbs for want of a job. The difficulty of employing a large number of Siberian convicts is vastly enhanced by the difficulty and the expense of the carriage of raw materials, and the comparatively small demand for manufactured articles.

Our distribution of books was highly appreciated at Tomsk, and one prisoner gave me in return a paper-knife he had made, for which he would accept no money.

In the underground storehouse we saw quass in huge vats worthy of an abbot's cellar, and large receptacles for sour cabbage, of which the Russians make soup. The cabbage is salted in September and pressed, and in ten days is ready for use. The store contained also a large number of tongues, which cost on the spot from 2*d.* to 6*d.* each. In one of the wards, the men who formed the church choir asked permission to sing us a hymn, which they did very creditably.

The most pleasing part of our visit, however, was that made to an adjoining building within the prison grounds—an institution for the children of prisoners and of the poor, which had been built by the local committee. The matron apologized that they were not in holiday trim, but the place was as neat and clean as could be. We called in the afternoon. The girls had an English sewing-machine, and were busy at work, whilst some were embroidering elaborate initials in the corners of handkerchiefs, to the orders of ladies in the town. Some of the boys were learning shoemaking, whilst others were taught to be of use in waiting on the doctors in the prisoners' hospital. Such progress do some of them make that one boy had recently left the school to go to help a doctor at the gold-mines, for which he was to receive his board and lodging, and £30 a year. There are certain funds in connection with the institution, by means of which the girls, on leaving to go out to service, receive various gifts up to about £50; and with this, one of the committee told us, they not unfrequently take away an education which makes them better informed than their Siberian mistresses.

Before we had been many hours in Tomsk we dis-

covered an English lady, with whom and her husband we dined, and who told us that a certain Finnish pastor —Roshier, who had been named to me in my Finnish correspondence—was staying in the town. We therefore sought him out to ask advice concerning the whereabouts and the mode of approach to some of the Finnish colonies which I was anxious to visit.

The reader will perhaps wonder how there come to be Finnish colonies in Siberia at all. Often when a Finnish prisoner is condemned to a certain term of imprisonment in his own country, he petitions the Grand Duke, who is the Emperor of Russia, to send him instead to Siberia as a colonist, and the request is usually granted. I recollect meeting a young man at Wiborg, in the castle prison, in 1874, who told me that, rather than serve for three years as a convict in the town of his birth, he had asked to be allowed to go to Siberia. The Finns do not usually speak Russian. Consequently, on arriving in Siberia, they are quasi-foreigners, and, accordingly, are not scattered hither and thither, but put together in villages with Lithuanian, Esthonian, Lettish, and other convicts from the Baltic provinces. Of this nature are the colonies I wished to visit near Omsk, called Ruschkova and Jelanka, each with 400 inhabitants, and near to which are four villages, bearing the home-names of Riga, Reval, Narva, and Helsingfors. Another colony of a similar kind is Werchne Sujetuk, about 50 miles south of Minusinsk.* Pastor Roshier had been settled there

* Since 1850, it appeared, 541 persons have been sent there, of whom 142 are dead; 20 for fresh crimes were transported further east, and 80 have disappeared—probably run away to live by pilfering and plunder. Some of the last-named possibly have been killed by the Russians and buried; for when the peasants catch men of this kind doing them mischief, so far

for 15 years, and was returning home. The Finnish Government were looking out for one to fill his place, to whom they offered a stipend of £150 per annum; but when I heard from Mr. Roshier that he had not conversed with an educated fellow-countryman for 10 years, that he could speak no Russian, and that his dwelling had been in the midst of convicts only, I was not surprised to hear that the Finnish Government had a difficulty in finding a successor.

For my own part, it had been my intention certainly to turn aside to Werchne Sujetuk, thinking to go across country to Minusinsk, return by raft on the Yenesei, or by road, to Krasnoiarsk, and there await the arrival of the remainder of our luggage—plans which a better knowledge of the country afterwards taught me were visionary indeed. When we did subsequently arrive at Krasnoiarsk, we found persons who, on account of the floods, had been waiting a fortnight to go to Minusinsk.* The remainder, however, of our baggage was not yet come from Tiumen, and could not arrive for a week; so we agreed meanwhile to make a *détour*

off are the courts, and so difficult is the bringing of witnesses, that they take the law into their own hands, and put the malefactors to death. In all, there should be now 547 persons living at Werchne Sujetuk, including 358 Finns. But about 300 live away at the gold-mines, and so it comes to pass that not more than 10 or 12 families reside there regularly.

* Apart from and in addition to these difficulties, however, there were other considerations that dissuaded me from going—such as the small number of Finns I should find, my ignorance of their language, their not being in particular need of books, and the offer of the pastor to enclose mine in a parcel he was sending to the catechist he had left in charge. All this caused me to listen to what proved good advice, and instead of going, I determined to send about a third of my books by the pastor. When further east, I elected to go home through America, consequently another third of my books was sent to the Lutheran pastor at Omsk. Some were left also for the Lutheran pastor at Irkutsk; and I gave the remainder to various prisons and persons for the Finns in the east.

to Barnaul. There we should find a prison, and another in the same direction, at Biisk, to which we could send; priests and people would be benefited by the way; and we hoped to see the Emperor's *usine* for the smelting of gold and silver. This looked more inviting, even though it involved a journey of 700 miles, than loitering at Tomsk for a week. We were now to begin tarantass travelling in earnest, which I think had better be once for all described, partly for the benefit of the uninitiated, who may possibly become Siberian travellers, and partly that the reader may not be wearied hereafter by a too frequent recurrence to the same topic.

CHAPTER XII.

SIBERIAN POSTING.

Travelling by post-horses.—The courier, crown, and ordinary *podorojna*.—The tarantass.—Packing.—Harness.—Horses.—Roads.—Pains and penalties.—Crossing rivers.—Cost.—Speed.—Post-houses.—Meat and drink.

WHEN you purpose to travel "post" in Russia, your first business is to get a *podorojna*, or permit, of which there are three kinds. The first is a "courier's" podorojna, which is used by passengers travelling in hot haste upon important—generally Government—business. Each post-master reserves three horses in case a courier should arrive, in which event only a certain number of minutes is allowed for changing the horses, and away goes the courier at breathless speed. Not long before my visit an exile, condemned to the east, had reached the city of Tomsk, a distance of nearly 3,000 miles from the capital, when, for some reason, his presence was required by the authorities in Petersburg. They telegraphed, therefore, that he was to be brought back *couriersky*; where-

upon he was placed between two gendarmes, and then over the stones they rattled the bones of that unfortunate man, till in 11 days they brought him to his destination. This sort of podorojna is reserved for special messengers and persons of importance; but, after hearing the foregoing story, I came to the conclusion that it is not every one who would appreciate the privilege of travelling couriersky.

Number 2 is a "crown" podorojna, recognised by post-boys who cannot read by its having two seals. This is not paid for, and is usually given to officers and persons on Government service, and sometimes to favoured private individuals. The bearer crosses bridges and ferries free, and need not pay for greasing his wheels; but its great advantage is that, when there is a lack of horses, the owner of a crown podorojna has a preferential claim. Podorojna number 3 is that used by ordinary travellers, for which at the outset you have to pay, by way of tax, a trifling amount per verst, according to the distance you intend to travel.

And now, having secured your podorojna, your next concern is for a vehicle. If you simply take that to which your podorojna entitles you, it will be a roofless, seatless, springless, semi-cylindrical tumbril, mounted on poles which connect two wooden axletrees, and out of this at every station you will have to shift yourself and your baggage. This is called travelling *peri-cladnoi*. From such a fate, gentle reader, may you be delivered! No, better buy a conveyance of your own. The vehicle I have alluded to is called by the general name of *tarantass*. The one you will purchase, though in many respects similar, and by some called also a tarantass, will be dignified by the post-boys with the

appellation of an "equipage." Like the other, it will be mounted on poles for springs, but the axles and body of the carriage will be of iron, and it will have a seat for the driver, and a hood, with a curtain and apron, under which you may sit by day and wherein you can sleep by night. The equipage may cost you from £20 to £30, and, if given to mercantile transactions, you may consider on the way how much you will gain or lose (for that is possible) by the sale of your vehicle at the end of the journey. A third way is to get a vehicle from one who—having come to Tomsk, for instance, to proceed to Russia—wishes his carriage taken back to Irkutsk. It was our good fortune to borrow the two we used, one being kindly lent by Mr. Oswald Cattley.

The packing of the vehicle requires nothing short of a Siberian education. Avoid boxes as you would the plague! The edges and corners will cruelly bruise your back and legs. Choose rather flat portmanteaus and soft bags, and spread them on a layer of hay at the bottom of the tarantass. Then put over them a thin mattress, and next a hearth-rug. When we entered Tiumen, women besieged us with these hearth-rugs, as I thought them. Not knowing what they were for, I could not conceive what they meant by such conduct. Had my companion been a lady, I should have deemed that they thought us on a bridal trip, and about to set up housekeeping. But I was innocent of all such devices, and chased the women away. When it was discovered what the carpets were for, I regretted not having bought one. Next, put at the back of the carriage two or more pillows of the softest down, for which please send on your order in advance, because these

must be bought as opportunity offers. If a housewife has finished the manufacture of a down pillow she wishes to sell, she will bring it into Ekaterineburg to market; but, if you want such a thing on a given day, you may search the town and not get one.

You may now get in, cover your legs with a rug, and watch them harness the horses. Siberian post-horses are sorry objects to look at, but splendid creatures to go. A curry-comb probably never touches their coats; but, under the combined influence of coaxing, scolding, screaming, and whip, they attain a pace which in England would be adjudged as nothing short of "furious driving." They are smaller than English horses, but much hardier, and are driven two, three, four, or even five or more, abreast. The Russian harness is a complicated affair, the most noticeable feature being the *douga*, or arched bow, over the horse's neck. To the foreigner this looks a needless incumbrance, but the Russian declares that it holds the whole concern together. The rods are fastened to the ends of the bow, and the horse's collar in turn to the shafts, so that the collar remains a fixture, against which the horse is obliged to push. The shafts are supported by a saddle and pad on the back, and do not touch the horse's body. The centre horse only is in rods; those on either side, how many soever they be, are called a "pair," and are merely attached by ropes. If you have been wise, you have bought at the *Gostinnoi Dvor* about 20 yards of inch-rope to go all round the back of the vehicle, and to which are attached the two outer horses. The post-men are supposed to supply such a rope, but theirs are often thin and rotten. It is well, too, to take several fathoms of half-inch rope. One of the wheels

may become rickety, and threaten to fall to pieces, in which case the rope will be needed to interlace the spokes. A third supply should be laid in of still smaller cord, in case of spraining a pole or the rods. Do not forget to purchase besides a hatchet. All these we took, and more than all were wanted.

When the driver, or *yemstchik*, has taken his seat, the horses will not stay a minute. Indeed, in some districts, the horses' heads are held while the driver mounts, and, when freed, they start with a bound. And now begin your pains and penalties!

When, at Nijni Tagilsk, we descended by ladders 600 feet into a copper-mine, and came up in the same manner, we were warned that on the following day we should be terribly stiff; but I aver that the consequences were as nothing compared with those of the first day's travelling by tarantass. The roughness of the roads and the lack of springs combine to cause a shaking up, the very remembrance of which is painful. Let the reader imagine himself about to descend a hill at the foot of which is a stream, crossed by a corduroy bridge of poles. The ordinary tarantass has no brake, the two outer horses are in loose harness, and the one in rods has no breeching. The whole weight of the machine, therefore, is thrown on his collar, and the first half of the hill is descended as slowly as may be. But the speed soon increases, first because the rod-horse cannot help it, and next because an impetus is desired to carry you up the opposite hill. All three horses, therefore, begin to pull, and, long before the bridge is reached, you are going at a flying pace, and everybody has to "hold on." The bridge is approached, and now comes the excruciating moment. Most likely

—almost to a certainty—the rain has washed away the earth a good six inches below the first timber of the bridge, against which bump! go your fore-wheels, and thump! go your hind ones; whilst fare and driver are alike shot up high into the air. I have a lively recollection of these ascents, some of which were so high that, when travelling from Archangel to Lake Onega, we had the hood removed, lest our skulls should strike the top. Happily, all roads are not so perilously rough, and, briefly to summarize my experience of them, I should say that those of Tobolsk and Tomsk are muddy, causing the yemstchiks, when possible, to avoid them—to go into lanes and by-ways, over hillocks and fallen timber, and down into holes and ditches, all of which give variety to the route. The Yeneseisk roads deserve nothing but praise; they are well kept, and would be reckoned good in England. The Irkutsk ways deteriorate, and those beyond Baikal are worse than all; for the Buriat yemstchiks drive you furiously over hillocks, rocks, and stones.

Nor are roads the only things to be traversed; there are numerous streams and rivers—some with bridges, but more without. Through some of these your horses simply walk; on others there is a well-kept ferry, upon which you and your carriage are drawn or rowed. On one occasion our vehicle was put on the ferry, and the horses made to swim the stream. It sometimes happens, however, especially in early spring, that the ice or floods have carried away or damaged the ferry, and a flat-bottomed boat is temporarily substituted. In this manner we crossed the Tom. The tarantass was lifted by degrees into the boat, one wheel at a time. The boat was only

just wide enough to take the vehicle, and we were advised to let down the hood, lest the wind should blow us over. This was about the only time I felt nervous, and I confess being thankful when we safely reached the opposite shore.

The cost of these pleasures of travel is not so great in Siberia as might be supposed. In the western division, where pasture is abundant, the hire of each horse is only about a halfpenny per mile. In Eastern Siberia the fare is exactly double. Horses are changed about every ten or fifteen miles, and each new driver looks for a gratuity, euphemistically called "money for *tea*." On the amount of the "tip" depends your speed. Ten kopecks are often given, but we found fifteen put the boys in better humour, and we made from 100 to 130 miles a day. Two hundred versts in a day and night, for summer travelling, is considered good, and we sometimes did it; but given a Russian merchant, bound for a fair, where his early arrival will give him command of the market, and then a "tip" of, say, a rouble a stage will in winter get him over 300 versts, or 200 miles a day. It is common to hear Siberians boast of quick journeys made thus, but they are usually attained only at cruel cost to the horses. The reader may judge what speed can be made from a story told us at Tiumen of a Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, whom the late Emperor, some 12 winters ago, required on an emergency at Petersburg, a distance from Irkutsk of 3,700 miles. The General was put in a bear's skin, wrapped up like a bundle, placed in a sledge, and in 11 days was brought to the capital. Several horses dropped dead on the way, an ear was cut from each as a voucher, and the journey

continued. When governors of provinces travel, they are supplied with the best horses in the villages, and sometimes have them changed at the half stage, so as to spare the animals whilst securing extra speed.

Having said this much about the vehicles, horses, and roads, the reader may wonder how it fares with the traveller in the matters of lodging and board, which brings me to the subject of post-houses. These, like the post-horses, are the property of the Government, and are of very varied quality, from the best—which have all the appearance and the comfort of a roomy, well-established English farm-house or country inn—to the worst, which are little better than hovels. Certain features, however, are common to them all. On one side of the door, as you enter, will be found the room in which the post-folks and their children live, and on the other will be one or more rooms reserved for travelling guests. The guests' room will never contain less than the following articles: a table, a chair, a candlestick, a bed, or rather a bench—padded, if in a good house, but of bare boards in the humbler ones—an *ikon* or sacred picture, a looking-glass, and sundry framed notices. One of these notices is a tariff of meat and drink—not that you are to suppose for a moment that any amount of money would purchase the luxuries named thereon, but the Government makes every post-master take out a victualler's licence, and named thereupon are the prices which he would charge for the delicacies IF HE HAD THEM! No—bed and board are the rub of Siberian travel. You may safely rely upon getting at any station a supply of boiling water, and probably some black bread; but beyond this all is uncertainty. In

Western Siberia milk and eggs are plentiful and cheap —the latter a farthing each; and everywhere, if you arrive at dinner-time, there is a chance of getting some meat, which you may or may not be able to eat. The fact is, you must take your own provisions, and for this winter is better than summer, because then you have simply to freeze your meat and chop off a piece with your hatchet when required. It is easy, moreover, to start with a stock of frozen meat pies, one of which, thrown in hot water, is eatable in a few minutes; and so with lumps of frozen cream. Tea and sugar are carried, of course, by every traveller in Russia; and to these were added a small quantity of tinned meat, fresh butter, anchovy paste, and marmalade—the last two as qualifiers in case we were reduced to black bread. These things, with a stock of white bread taken from the larger towns, formed a base, for which we were thankful. If anything better fell in the way, it was so much to the good; if white bread and butter failed, then we hoped for improved circumstances. These remarks apply, of course, to the hundreds of miles of country between the towns. In the towns we fared comparatively well. Such are some of the features of tarantass travel for which we prepared ourselves at Tomsk. What occurred will be related in its proper place.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM TOMSK SOUTHWARDS.

Application for horses.—Effect of Petersburg letter.—A false start.—A horse killed.—Attempted cooking.—Siberian weather.—Meteorology.—Scenery.—Trees, plants, and flowers.—An elementary school.—Education in Western Siberia.

THOUGH our journey to Barnaul took place quite early in our posting career, it was by no means devoid of incident. On Thursday, June 12th, we sent for a "troika" of horses at noon, and were coolly told by the postal authorities that we could have them towards midnight. Now the chief of their department at Petersburg had favoured me with a special letter, addressed to the post-masters on our route, enjoining them to help me, and requesting that I might be delayed as little as possible. We had been favoured likewise with a crown podorojna. This latter had been presented, but to no purpose; and it seemed a clear case for bringing our heavy artillery into action. We presented, therefore, the postal letter, and the effect was magical. Before the official had half read it, he sprang to his feet, eyed me respectfully, bustled off to his chief, and, speedily returning, promised the horses in an hour. They appeared punctually, and we started "troika" fashion—that is, three horses driven abreast. Unfortunately, however, the *starosta*, or man in charge

of the postal yard, could not read our podorojna, and he took it for granted that we wished to go towards Krasnoiarsk, and told the yemstchik to drive us thither. Nor was it till we had run some dozen miles or more that it was discovered we were not on the road to Barnaul. We had, of course, to retrace our steps to Tomsk, and then we heard that it was not the first time this starosta had sent off travellers in the wrong direction. The mistake in our case had caused the extra expenditure of eighteen pennyworth of horse-flesh, and I thought it right to visit the loss of this sum on the starosta for the benefit of future travellers as well as our own. I therefore declined to pay for the privilege of having been taken out of our way, and left the starosta to settle with the post-master.

Making a fresh start, we found ourselves by nightfall near the river Tom. The ordinary road was under water, and the banks of the stream were so flooded that we were obliged to take a cross-country road leading some 25 miles out of the way; and as it went over hill and dale, and almost "hedges and ditches," we were advised to stay till morning. But we pushed on, crossed the river at daybreak, and at the third station, in the direction of the Barabinsky steppe, turned southwards, and travelled well till Saturday evening, when, on stopping awhile to rest the horses, one of them dropped and died upon the spot. We were pulling the creature off the road—one having hold of a leg, another of her tail, and so on—when the remaining horses, as if indignant at such conduct, rushed over the bank, and tore away with the tarantass into the forest. Some of us pursued, and fortunately caught and brought them back without further harm.

The loss of a horse is more serious in Eastern than in Western Siberia, where people have herds of horses worthy of patriarchs. One lady told me that her husband possessed from 4,000 to 5,000 horses, and about as many cows. Pasturage is abundant, and horse-flesh is cheap. Our horse was reckoned a good one, and valued at £4 10*s*. The post-master could claim nothing from us for its loss, and thanked us warmly for 10*s*. towards repairing his damage. As we went along we saw large herds of mares with their foals, turned loose for the summer in company with a single horse to guard them. Should danger approach, in the form of a wild beast for instance, the stallion drives all the mares within a circle with their heels outwards, and the foals in the centre, whilst he stamps the ground with rage and dares the wolf to come within reach of their hoofs.

When we reached the last river we had to cross, which at ordinary times was probably not half a mile wide, we found it so flooded that the ferry-boat had a journey of more than five miles. This took a long while, and, when returning, we thought to save time by eating a meal on the water. In my luncheon-basket is a "Rob Roy" cuisine, with a view to the using of which, before leaving England, I took an evening's cooking lesson. I was now anxious to demonstrate to the Russians that it was possible to make a cup of tea without the aid of a *samovar*. We therefore commenced operations, there being on board not only our own three horses, but half-a-dozen others with their drivers and tarantasses. The great advantage of this cuisine is that, whereas a puff of wind may extinguish an ordinary spirit-lamp, the "Rob Roy," by setting fire

to the steam of the spirit, burns so furiously that a hurricane will not blow it out. It makes, however, a considerable roar; and when matters reached this stage, not only were all the natives surprised, but the horses began so to kick and to plunge that we feared an upset. One of the drivers said his horse was 30 years old, and had never heard such a noise in his life! So, for the general safety of all on board, I packed up my kitchen and had to forego the tea.

Hitherto our Siberian tour had been highly enjoyable. South of Tomsk the weather was charming, and the new spring vegetation lovely. A question that has been repeatedly put to me since my return to England is, "Did you not find it very cold in Siberia?" It may be well, therefore, that this question should here be answered. Snow fell on the night we entered the country, and the ground next morning, May 29th, was white; but the snow disappeared after an hour or two, and we saw no more for some days. By the 5th of June we reached on the Obi a latitude 100 miles north of Petersburg, where the buds had not yet opened, nor had the winter floods subsided. I heard subsequently that the opening of spring had come that year unusually early in Petersburg, and exceptionally late in Siberia, where the ice usually breaks up at Tobolsk at the end of April. On the 6th of June we had snow, and the trees on the banks had little verdure till we reached Tomsk on the 9th, after which fine weather set in, and was followed by almost uninterrupted sunshine till the beginning of autumn. The summer climate, therefore, of those parts of Siberia through which I passed I consider

imply delightful—neither oppressively hot by day nor npleasantly cold by night.

Before leaving England, my neighbour, Mr. Glaisher he meteorologist, had urged me to take a few instruments for the purpose of making observations, and ıad kindly lent me for the journey a valuable unnounted thermometer. I took, besides, an aneroid ɔarometer, a compass, an anemometer, maximum ınd minimum thermometers, and two others. With hese instruments I felt very much like a boy leaving home on a summer morning with excellent fishing tackle, and bent on taking nothing less than trout. When returning, I felt that I had brought back minnows. On my first night out, at Cologne, my apparatus was duly exposed from the hotel window, and on reaching Petersburg I climbed daily to the top of the hotel to measure the velocity of the wind. At the copper-mine at Nijni Tagilsk I was resolved on being very learned, and took my instruments to test the temperature of springs and the velocity of air currents. But, alas! I broke my thermometer, and, having reached the bottom of the mine, had forgotten, when undressing, to take my watch. On the Obi I was able to take a few observations, but it was impossible to continue this during posting journeys; and further on I broke my minimum thermometer, after which I abandoned hope of attaining meteorological distinction.*

* My scientific attempts brought me in contact with some pleasant people; notably Captain Rykatcheff, of the Observatory in Petersburg, and with others at Moscow. Ekaterineburg, Tomsk, etc.; at all of which places they have observatories, that near Petersburg being, I was told, in some respects better than ours at Greenwich. The Russians take considerable pains in collecting data from 103 stations throughout the

The journey to Barnaul revealed to us beauties of scenery and vegetation for which we were hardly prepared after the flat and leafless districts through which we had been passing. The landscape now became undulating, and the traveller who passes further south to Biisk, and beyond, approaches the regions of the Altai chain, which are spoken of as well worth seeing.*

Empire, of which 14 are in Siberia, namely: at Omsk, Akmolinsk, Semipolatinsk, Tomsk, Barnaul, Kuznetsk, Yeneseisk, Turukhansk, Irkutsk, Kiakhta, Nertchinsk mines, Blagovestchensk, Nikolaefsk, and Vladivostock. The Russians have an observatory also in China, at Peking; and I think I heard of some new ones established on the Obi. They register thrice daily—at seven, one, and nine—the readings of the barometer, the dry and wet bulb thermometers giving the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere, the direction of the wind, and the amount of clouds, rain, snow, etc.; and these statistics are collected and published at Petersburg with a fulness which exceeds, I am told, anything that we do in poor England. I was presented with the Report for 1877 (the last then published)—a great volume of 600 pages. It will be from this source that I shall from time to time air before the reader my meteorological learning. Tomsk was the first of the Siberian stations at which we arrived, where the maximum temperature of the year rose, at one o'clock on the 6th August, to 106°.9, and the minimum temperature, 83°.2 below zero, occurred on Christmas Day. At Barnaul, some 200 miles south, it was a little hotter and a little colder, the maximum being 107°.8, and the minimum 84°.8 below zero. On the Sunday we spent there, June 15th, the temperature was the hottest we had experienced up to that time in Siberia; and we heard it is so cold in winter that small birds sometimes drop dead in the streets.

* The entire Altai system extends in a serpentine line, and under various names, from the Irtish to Behring Strait. The breadth of the chain varies from 400 to 1,000 miles. Its entire length is about 4,500 miles, but it is only to the portion west of Lake Baikal that the term Altai is applied. This part consists of a succession of terraces with swelling outline, descending in steps from the high tableland, and terminating in promontories on the Siberian plains. On these terraces (some of them at great height) are numerous lakes. The ordinary tablelands are given as not more than 6,000 feet high, and as seldom covered with perpetual snow, though it is otherwise with the Korgan tableland, which reaches 9,900 feet; and the two pillars of Katunya, which are said to attain to nearly 13,000 feet above the sea level. At the western extremity of the chain are metalliferous veins, in which several important workings have been established since 1872.

The grass between Tomsk and Barnaul was remarkable, and the further south we went the more luxuriant it became. Much of the flora was familiar, but we were now introduced to a good many trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers, found more or less in the country west of Irkutsk, that were new to us. The most prominent of the trees was the white-barked birch, justly called the "lady of the forest." We saw also the cedar-nut tree, the pitch pine, the larch, the flowering acacia, spruce fir, and alder, the white-pine, willow, lime, Siberian poplar, laburnum, and white-flowering cheriomkha—the last a beautiful object when in blossom, and yielding for fruit a small bird cherry. Among the shrubs appeared the white hawthorn, and an abundance of wild red currants, which, like bird cherries, are eaten by the people—the latter being made into bread and cakes, and, in common with other fruits, put into brandy to make *naliphka*. These fruits are very sour as compared with the English kinds. Strawberry and raspberry plants abounded, though we did not get our first plate of wild strawberries till 11th July. In autumn, numerous berries are plentiful, such as cranberries (called *klukva*), bilberries, cowberries, bearberries, stoneberries, the mountain ash berry, and the Arctic bramble. All these are found, too, in European Russia, north of Petersburg, the last having a blossom like a single rose, a strawberry leaf, and a fruit resembling the English blackberry. In summer, strawberries and raspberries are the best fruits within reach of the Siberian traveller until he reaches the southern region of the Amur. Among the spring flowers we missed (or perhaps overlooked) the pale primrose; but violets are found, also sweet-williams, daisies,

foxgloves, rich camomile flowers, the wild rose, crocus, lily of the valley, and many others. The fields were actually blue with forget-me-nots. We noticed also on this journey what was to me a new plant, bearing an orange flower something like a buttercup, but very much larger, and of which there were many. Also east of Tomsk we saw a large red lily, made much of in English gardens, but which here was growing wild; also, in great abundance, a red flower very much like the peony.

On the road to Barnaul, at a place called Medvedsky, is an elementary school, to which, in returning, we paid a visit, and so were brought into contact with village education.* There were in attendance 32 boys and girls, of ages varying from 6 to 16, most of whom came from distant places (some 30 miles off), and lodged in the village. Only 8 were from the immediate neighbourhood. Adults sometimes attend the school, in which the education is free, the school being supported by the commune or *mir*. The scholars attend daily

* In the uyezd or district of Tiumen, which is one out of 9 in the province of Tobolsk, there are 24 schools; at Tobolsk we heard of 12 schools more. In the villages about Barnaul there are few schools, but there are some in the district of the mines and the works. In Tomsk are a few upper-class schools, as also at Tobolsk; and we met at Tomsk a school inspector. Further, from the *Golos* of 25th June, 1879 (old style), it appeared that the Russian Government had lately opened a classical school, or *gymnase*, at Omsk; a *real*, or commercial school, at Tomsk; and *pro-gymnases*, or preparatory classical schools for girls, at Tomsk and Barnaul. It was further stated that in 1878 there were in Western Siberia 22 upper-class schools, with an attendance of 3,200 scholars; and that other such schools were asked for at Semipolatinsk, Petropavlofsk, Kainsk, and Barnaul. In Western Siberia, in 1878, 546 schools of a lower class existed, numbering 15,000 scholars, of whom, however, the remarkable preponderance of 13,000 boys over 2,000 girls is startling. The Russians have had schools for some time for Kirghese boys, and they have two also for Kirghese girls; whilst, as observed before, they opened in 1879 a school at Obdorsk for the Ostjaks and Samoyedes.

from 8 o'clock till 2, after which hour some of them learn bookbinding. Sundays and saints' days are holidays, but the children are required to be every Sunday at church. There was a priest in the room giving instruction. I asked the children some Scripture questions, but was poorly answered. Many of the children, however, jumped at the opportunity of purchasing a New Testament for 1¼*d.*, and we left a supply for them. The master wished the boys to be examined in arithmetic, whereupon, among other questions, I asked them, "What two numbers multiplied together make 7?" They knitted their brows as if making a great effort—and even the master's countenance seemed to betray that he thought the question too difficult. All laughed heartily, however, when, on giving it up, I told them that the factors were 7 and 1. The master lived in an adjoining part of the house; and in this far-off place I observed on the wall of the schoolmaster's room, as I had seen on that of one of the prison officials at Tiumen, an English engraving of the portrait of Professor Darwin. The schoolmaster said I was the first Englishman he had seen, gladly purchased some of our books, and thanked us for our visit.

CHAPTER XIV.

BARNAUL.

Situation of town.—Cemetery.—Burial of the dead.—The Emperor's usine.—Visit to Mr. Clark.—Visits to hospital and prison.—A recently-enacted tragedy.—Crime of the district.—Smelting of silver and gold.—Price of land and provisions.—Return to Tomsk.

WE reached Barnaul very early on Sunday morning, having traversed, after leaving the flooded river Obi, a miniature *Sahara*, or desert of sand. Barnaul, like Tobolsk and Tomsk, lies at the foot of a hill. It has 13,000 inhabitants. On the top of the hill is a cemetery, which was the first we had met with; but it did not convey a favourable impression of Siberian burying-places. Indeed, I have not been greatly struck by Russian cemeteries, whether in Europe or in Asia, though on the graves of their emperors the Russians place monuments of considerable taste, which deserve to be placed in the same category with memorials of the departed such as those of Frederick William III. and his Queen at Charlottenburg, or the tomb of Napoleon in the Hotel des Invalides. But it is otherwise, as I have said, with average Russian tombs.*

* In the Russian Church there are five offices for the burial of the dead, namely, two for the laity, and one each for monks, priests, and children. The priest is sent for immediately after death, and performs a service. The rich usually have relays of priests to continue praying so

From the cemetery at Barnaul are seen its half-dozen churches and a large building known as the Emperor's *usine*, or gold and silver smelting works. Most of the business of the town is connected with mining; and many surveyors and engineers live in the adjacent mountains in summer, and in Barnaul in winter. The discovery of the precious metals in the Altai regions was made by one of the Demidoffs, who is said to have been sent there by Peter the Great. His monument in brass stands in the public square at Barnaul. We had an introduction to the manager of the usine, Mr. Clark, who is the son of an Englishman, and who reads but does not speak his father's language. We found in his spacious house a good collection of English books, together with copies of the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Graphic*, *All the Year Round*, and the weekly edition of the *Times*. On the Sunday afternoon our host took us to visit the poor-house and the hospital. In this latter were 14 rooms, which had the advantage of being very lofty and airy, though they struck me as not particularly tidy.

In the 9 rooms of the prison were 120 criminals, one of whom, a day or two previously, had within the prison walls enacted a tragedy, the circumstances of which would furnish material for a sensational novel. The rooms of the prison are ranged on either side of

long as the corpse remains in the house. Burials always take place in the morning. The corpse is taken into the church with the face uncovered, looking eastward, and before removal is kissed by the priest and relatives. At the grave the priest casts earth upon it. Further (though this is not ecclesiastically prescribed), the Russians have services for the dead at the grave, or at the church, on the third, the ninth, and the fortieth day, also on the anniversaries of the departed one's death and birthday, the last two being continued for some persons for many years. They do not, however, believe in purgatory.

a wide corridor, and in one of them was a number of women, one of whom had murdered her husband and was condemned to Eastern Siberia, to which she was on her way, though for some reason detained at Barnaul. In one of the male wards was a young man, formerly under-manager of a shop in the town, who had been suspected of stealing, and was imprisoned for three months. He had served out this time within a week; but during his stay in the prison he made the acquaintance of, and became more or less attached to, the murderess, holding conversation with her from the corridor during the time allowed for exercise. Another male prisoner was by these two taken into council, and the three determined to attempt an escape, by means of wooden keys which the men were to make. The plot, however, was discovered, and the woman, finding that she must proceed to her destination and leave her lover, tried to kill herself. But she was prevented. She therefore adopted another plan of ridding herself of life. In the door of the women's chamber was an inspection-hole, unusually large. This she cut a little larger, thrust her head through into the corridor where the man was walking, and begged him, if he loved her, to take her life; upon which he took a knife, cut her throat, and so effectually killed her. We saw the stains of the blood still on the door, for the deed had been done only a day or two before our visit. Close at hand was the prisoner, placed in a separate and rather dark cell, and chained hand and foot—the only man I saw so chained in Siberia. As he walked out of his cell, I walked in, and found on the floor a quantity of cigarettes and a book of songs. Upon my pointing to the cigarettes, the officer said that the prisoners managed

to smuggle them in; and then came out the old story, that this prisoner had managed also to smuggle in drink, under the influence of which he had committed this horrid murder. On asking what punishment he would

CONVICT SUMMER CLOTHING AND CHAINS.

be likely to receive, we were told that he would probably be condemned to hard labour for about 16 years; and we were further informed that in the small district of Barnaul, consisting of less than half the population

of Liverpool, there are usually about 10 murders a year. As we went from room to room, the police-master introduced me to the prisoners as an Englishman travelling through Siberia who had brought them books, which usually elicited an expression of thanks. We left them a New Testament and papers for each room, doing the like also for the hospital and poor-house, and sending a supply for the prison at Biisk.

On Monday we went with Mr. Clark to see the Emperor's usine, to which is brought mineral from Smirnagorsk, 200 miles distant, as well as from other parts of the Altai mountains, where are mines, the ore from which contains for the more part copper and silver. They find there but very little lead. Nor is the quantity of iron worked at all large—chiefly, I believe, for lack of capital and energy. In 1879 only 507 tons of iron were cast, and 238 tons wrought in the government of Tomsk. Many thousand *poods* of copper are obtained annually in the district, but not smelted at Barnaul. These mines are called the private mines of the Emperor, and the revenues belong to the Crown. In them are employed from 1,500 to 2,000 men (not, in this case, convicts), and the ore from the Altai regions is brought to be smelted to four different works for silver, and one for copper.

The smelting of silver is carried on at Barnaul all the year round. They burn charcoal, which costs 10*s.* a ton. The ore as brought from the mine is called *mineral*, and 4,000 tons of mineral yield 2 tons of silver—that is, 2,000 parts of ore yield one part of pure metal.*

* The processes of smelting are three. The mineral is first powdered, and a handful taken to the assaying house. Here we saw a man making

We went from the usine to the museum, which could not fail to be interesting to a mining engineer or a geologist. There was a large and well-assorted collection of minerals; models of the principal Altai silver-mines, showing the shafts, adits, and galleries, with their machinery; models of gold-washing machines, of quartz mills, and of furnaces and works in various parts of Siberia. Among the natural curiosities of the

small crucibles of clay, at the rate of 1,000 a day. In two cups, one having bone in its composition, is put an ascertained quantity of the mineral: both are placed in the furnace, and the result shows what proportion of pure metal the mineral will yield. The powdered mineral is then taken to furnace No. 1, which is like an iron furnace, and from 20 to 30 feet high. Into this the mineral is put with charcoal, and, after remaining there about 12 hours, there comes out of the furnace a black compound of lead and silver called *ruststein*. The ruststein is then placed in furnace No. 2 with lead, and, after remaining there for a short time (three tons, for instance, for an hour), the silver is extracted by the lead, and the compound which comes out is called *werchblei*. This is put into furnace No. 3, where 16 tons would remain three days, with the result that the lead oxydizes into *glot*, and is run off, whilst the silver remains and sinks to the bottom of the furnace. It is then taken out in round cakes from 12 to 15 inches in diameter, and sent to Petersburg. The cakes we saw had a dull hue, very much resembling lumps of newly molten lead, and were valued at £3 6*s*. 8*d*. per pound.

A simpler process is the smelting of gold, carried on in a room about 20 feet square, having a tall furnace in the centre, in which are fires not much larger than those in a laundry copper. The gold is brought to the usine in dust and small nuggets, tied up in leather bags, and begins to arrive from the mines at the end of June. The smelting goes on to the end of October. Some of the leathern bags were shown to us, duly sealed, and with particulars written thereon. One, about the size of a hen's egg, was worth £36; and another, the size of a blackbird's egg, was marked £5. When opened, the gold, just as it comes from the washings, with borax as a flux, is put into an earthenware pot, and then placed in the fire, after which it fuses, and is poured out into an iron mould in the shape of a flat bar. A bar we saw weighed 15 pounds.

In the season they sometimes have in the strong-room 250 poods—say from four to five tons—of gold, which the previous summer had been worth £2,000 a pood, making a total value of £500,000 for gold alone. At the end of the season the silver and gold are sent to the capital, under charge of a military escort.

museum were the stock of a tree, with branches that represented pretty accurately a man in a sitting posture; and a piece of wood, which, when split, had been found to contain a cross inside. In the ethnological department were some good costumes of the Kirghese and of a Tunguse *shaman*, or priest and priestess. They had also in another room an eagle's nest, and several specimens of the Altai eagle; but in the zoological department the most remarkable specimen was the stuffed skin of a tiger killed in the southern part of the district, where this animal is usually unknown.

The price of land and provisions at Barnaul was such as might make many a man sigh to live there. The price for the hire of cleared black soil was 3½*d.* an English acre. We saw them scratching the surface of it (for their instrument was so shallow that it was a mockery to call it ploughing), and yet such farming yields there an abundant crop. They take just a little of their stable manure for cucumber beds, but burn the rest to get rid of it, never thinking of putting it on the land: but when they have used a field for a few years, and it is becoming exhausted, they take fresh ground. The cost of provisions in this fertile district is on a level with the prices quoted on the Obi. Black rye flour costs half-a-farthing per English pound; undressed wheat flour, such as we use for brown bread, costs 2*s.* per cwt.; whilst white wheaten flour costs up to 16*s.* for a sack of 180 pounds. The price of meat is similar. In the summer, when it will not keep and is dear, beef costs 1¼*d.* per lb.; but in winter, when it can be kept in a frozen condition, it sells for less than ½*d.* per English pound. Veal is more expensive, and costs 1½*d.*; whilst aristocratic persons, who live on grouse, have to

pay as much as from *2d.* to 2½*d.* per brace. In this part of Siberia it is rare to find a peasant without a stock of horses and cows, and a man with a family to help him can make an excellent living. When I wrote, in April 1880, some letters to the *Times* on Siberian prisons, one gentleman said he thought there would be a *rush* thither, because I made things look so comfortable. In case, therefore, the quotation of these prices should tempt any of my readers to emigrate, I think it right to point out that in this district carriage is dear and labour is scarce, a workman earning 1*s.* 3*d.* a day, or, if provided with food, 6*s.* a month.

We should have liked well to have stayed longer in this part of the country, and to have made our way among the hordes south and west, in the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk, which contain a population of 10,000 and 9,000 respectively.* Our time, however, did not permit of our so doing ; and therefore, after a very pleasant stay at Barnaul, and a final lunch

* Dr. Finsch, who travelled with an exploring party up the Irtish in 1876, has put on record much information of a scientific character about this part of Siberia. Mr. Atkinson, an English artist, with his wife, also spent seven years in Central Asia and the Kirghese steppes. He gives fuller information than I have met elsewhere of the Kirghese, who number nearly 1,500,000 souls. They live either in tents or in caverns resembling rabbit burrows, both of which are filthy beyond measure. The appearance of the Kirghese, judging by those I saw in the prisons, is anything but prepossessing—the nose sinks into the face, and the cheeks are large and bloated. They eat chiefly mutton and horse-flesh, and drink tea and mare's milk. The last, when fermented, is called *koumis*, and is kept in the tent in a large leathern sack, said to be never washed out. The Kirghese are splendid horsemen ; and their usual occupation is tending sheep, goats, horses, and camels, of which they possess immense herds Indeed, I was told that, in the *aoul* or encampment of a rich Kirghese chief, one can see in the present day the principal objects that were witnessed 4,000 years ago, when the patriarch Abraham was a dweller in tents, and pastured cattle.

with Mr. Clark, we bade our host adieu, and on Wednesday, June 18th, we re-entered Tomsk, where we found our luggage arrived, and for the carriage of which, by steamer, Mr. Ignatoff—to his liberality be it said—would make no charge. When I added this concession to the reduced rate we had paid on the Obi for our tarantass, our berths, and excess luggage—to say nothing of the personal attention shown on board to "Mr. Missionary,"—and all this without my having breathed a word as to charges, I thought it very handsome, and I gladly record this good deed spontaneously emanating from beneath the double-breasted coat of a Russian merchant.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIBERIAN CHURCH.

The Russian Church.—Geographical area.—History, doctrines, schisms.—Ecclesiastical divisions of Siberia.—Church committees.—Russian Church services.—Picture-worship.—Vestments.—Liturgy.—Ordination.—Baptism.—Marriage.—Minor services.

IT will be expected, of course, in a journey from the Urals to the Pacific, that something should be said of the Siberian Church, to treat of which is to treat of the Russian Church in Siberia. Wherever the Russians carry their arms, there, like the Romans, they carry their creed; and consequently all along the great Siberian highways, where the Russians dwell, they have their ecclesiastical system as in Europe. I shall therefore speak generally of things concerning the Greek Church, whether in Russia or Siberia, and illustrate them by what I have seen.

Our knowledge of the Russian Church comes to us chiefly from two sources: from the pens of ecclesiastical authors, and from the writings of modern travellers. From the latter, it is not too much to say that the Russians and their religion often receive a scant measure of justice, not to add misrepresentation; for when the British tourist looks upon the gorgeous and elaborate ritual of an Eastern Church, sees the picture-worship of the people, their kissing of relics, and

invocation of saints, he is reminded of like things in the Churches of Italy and Spain, and he not unfrequently condemns both East and West as superstitious and corrupt alike. Such a charge, however, is far too sweeping, and betrays a lack of knowledge of many points which, if more generally known, would certainly bring English Churchmen nearer, at least in sympathy, with members of the Church in Russia. On the other hand, the writings of ecclesiastical authors are usually so technical as to fail in bringing before us what the traveller sees as the everyday religious life of a people. It is desirable to avoid these two extremes, and to distinguish between the recognized standards of a Church's teaching, and the correspondence therewith, or otherwise, of the daily lives of its members.*

I do not propose to enter here upon the history,†

* In connection with this subject, we constantly meet with the terms "Eastern Church," "Greek Church," and "Russian Church." Let us distinguish between them. If on a map of Europe a line be drawn from the White Sea southwards to Petersburg, thence along the western border of Russia to Cracow, then along the eastern and southern frontier of Austria to the Adriatic, this line will roughly divide Christendom between the Churches of the East and of the West. Eastern Christendom is sometimes divided into three main groups of Churches, the *first* group being the Chaldean, the Armenian, the Syrian, the Egyptian, and the Georgian Churches. The second is the *Greek* Church, whose members, speaking the Greek language, are found as far south as the desert of Mount Sinai, through all the coasts and islands in the Levant and the Archipelago, and whose centre is Constantinople. This is the only living representative of the once powerful Church of Constantine called the "Orthodox Imperial Church." The *third* group of Eastern Churches consists partly of the Sclavonic peoples, found in the provinces of the Lower Danube, Bulgaria, Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia; and partly, and much more largely, of the Sclavonic people of Russia. The Russian Church, therefore, is an offshoot of the Greek Church of Constantinople, once the centre of Eastern Christianity, which Greek Church, by reason of its former Imperial grandeur, sometimes gives its name to the other Oriental communions.

† *See* Appendix A.

doctrines,* or schisms† of the Russian Church, but proceed to observe that, for ecclesiastical purposes, Siberia is divided into six dioceses, presided over by 7 bishops. It contains 1,515 churches and 1,509 clergy; 14 monasteries containing 147 monks, and 4 nunneries containing 62 nuns. Russian dioceses are subdivided into rural deaneries, each consisting of a circle of from ten to thirty parishes, some of which, in Siberia, must be very extensive, though not necessarily populous. A priest near Tobolsk, however, told me that he had 5,000 parishioners; another at Kansk, near Irkutsk, had 2,000, widely scattered; whilst on the Siberian coast of the Pacific, Nikolaefsk and Vladivostock, towns of 3,000 and 5,000 inhabitants respectively, form only one parish each. Every *selo* or town of a certain grade has a church; and in some of the *derevni*, or villages, churches and small chapels, or oratories, are built, in which latter, services, other than the liturgy or holy communion, may be performed. The churches and vestments are furnished and kept in repair by parochial committees, of not less than five persons, elected annually, who, on retiring from office, are called "church elders." They visit every house in the parish, and determine what proportion of the expenses should be paid by each householder. There would seem to be no difficulty in raising the necessary funds; and I must add that I was agreeably surprised in Siberia to see how well and how clean the churches were kept, even in the remotest and most out-of-the-way places.‡

* *See* Appendix B. † *See* Appendix C.

‡ Besides this parish church committee, there was formerly, and may be now in some instances, in large towns, a "directory," consisting of about four members. In each diocese there is a "consistory," of from

We had several opportunities, in passing through Siberia, of attending the Church services. Picture-worship is an almost universal attendant of Russian devotion—more so, if possible, than in Roman countries; and the Russian Church has found it necessary to issue many warnings against the perils of idolatry.*

Another prominent feature of "orthodox" worship is the plentiful use of lighted candles bought at the church entrance. In one church in Petersburg, and that not the largest, I was told that money is taken yearly for candles up to 10,000 roubles—say £1,000.

The vestments of the priests and bishops are gorgeous in the extreme. A metropolitan's "*sakkos*" is shown at Moscow, which is said to weigh 50 pounds, by reason of the pearls and gems with which it is embellished. At the Troitza monastery are fifteen dresses for the Archimandrite, one of which, for the mere making, cost the Empress Elizabeth £600, the robe itself being valued at £11,000. This monastery is said to possess amongst its treasures two bushels of

five to seven members, presided over by the bishop, the whole being under the synod. Appeals, therefore, lie from the directories (where they exist) to the consistory, from the consistory to the bishop, and from the bishop to the synod. The synod, which has equal civil rank with the senate, and the ecclesiastical rank of a patriarch, consists of bishops and priests, whose nomination, appointment, and length of membership depend on the will of the Sovereign. There sits also with them a lay procurator, who is the crown representative, and who has a veto which can be reversed only by appeal to the Emperor.

* The "orthodox" Church draws a nice distinction between the unlawfulness of using in church an image proper, and the lawfulness of using the same image if carved on a flat surface; but the ordinary observer, who beholds people in an Eastern Church bowing down before graven images and likenesses of things that are in heaven and in earth, must find it exceedingly difficult to determine where reverence ends and idolatry begins.

pearls, and, from what I have twice seen there, I am inclined to add an estimated *pint* of diamonds, to say nothing of emeralds, rubies, and sapphires innumerable!

The Church services are of a monastic character, long and tedious, read in Sclavonic, "which is to the modern Russian," it is said, "about what the language of Chaucer is to us"; so that, what with its ancient form and the rapidity with which the ecclesiastical language is read, it is practically unintelligible to many of the people. From time to time in the services commemorations are made of the Virgin and saints; and prayers are offered to them, blessings are asked of God through their intercessions, and the response, *Gospodi Pomilui*, "Lord, have mercy!" is uttered thirty, forty, fifty times or more, almost at a breath.

No instrumental music is allowed in the Russian Church; but the singing in large cathedrals, such as St. Isaac's at Petersburg (where they have 30 choristers dressed in blue and gold tunics), is exceedingly grand. I do not remember to have heard elsewhere such extraordinary harmony. The basses descended to depths almost abyssmal, and the trebles soared to and were sustained at a height perfectly marvellous, whilst other voices were so profusely blended that I can compare the effect of the whole to nothing better than to an exquisite colored window. The hymn called "The Cherubim," with music by Bortnyanski, I heard sung at Petersburg and Kasan; and at the latter place was not surprised to see tears falling from the eyes of a peasant woman near me, for my own were uncommonly moist. I made bold to approach and look over the music of one of the choristers, thereby alarming the Monk director, who, mistaking my interest, said after-

wards he thought I had perchance come from the Imperial choir to take away some of his best voices.

The ritual and services of the Russian Church are contained in twenty volumes folio. The greatest part of the service varies every day in the year except in the Liturgy, where the greater part is fixed.*

As we passed through Kasan we happened to see the ordination of a priest and a deacon, which was interesting. Holy orders are regarded by the Russian Church as a sacrament or mystery, but are not indelible. If, for instance, a widower priest wishes to marry again, he can do so by resigning his priest's orders and taking some inferior place among the minor orders, or by giving up his ecclesiastical profession altogether. They have five orders, namely, bishop, priest, deacon, sub-deacon, and reader; and the episcopal dignitaries consist of metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops, some of which latter are suffragans.†

* This Liturgy (which in the Greek Church always means the office for the Holy Communion, and is the ordinary morning service) is divided into three parts, namely, "the offering," during which the bread and wine are offered by the people, and prepared by the priest; "the liturgy of the catechumens," during which the Epistle and Gospel are read; and "the liturgy of the faithful," during which the elements are administered. The priest and deacon receive the bread and wine separately, as with us; the laity receive bread and wine mixed together from a spoon, and standing; whilst to infants wine only is administered, for fear of ejection. The priest receives daily, the devout quarterly or oftener, and every one by *law* yearly.

† Each of the five orders has a separate ordination. At the ordination of a *reader*, he is clothed with a vestment called a *stichárion*; and the bishop among other things says to him, "Son, . . . it is your duty daily to study the Holy Scriptures, and to endeavour to make such proficiency therein that those who hear you may receive edification." A *sub-deacon*, on ordination, wears an *orárion*, like an English stole, girded crosswise over his shoulders. The bishop puts a towel also on the left shoulder of the newly ordained, and delivers him a basin and ewer, in which the bishop washes his hands. A *deacon*, when ordained, kisses the four

The services connected with baptism in the Russian Church were formerly very numerous, though now they are frequently more or less combined ;* one principal difference in *practice* between the Greek and English Churches being that the former *always* baptizes by immersion. The child is usually named after one of the saints in the Russian calendar, the yearly recurrence of whose festival constitutes the person's " name's-day." This is observed in Russia more than the " birth-day," which practice has the advantage that if the Christian

corners of the holy table, the bishop's hands and shoulder, and the part of his garment called the *epigonation*. He kneels on his right knee, lays his hands crosswise on the holy table, and puts his forehead between his hands. The bishop's *omophorion*, or pall, is placed on his head, the stole on his left shoulder, and he is presented with sleeves or cuffs, and a fan with which to fan the sacramental elements. When ordained *priest*, the stole is exchanged for a similar vestment, called an *epitrachelion*, and there are also added a *phelonion* and a girdle.

The consecration, however, of a *bishop* is much more elaborate. He is called upon to confess the Nicene Creed. He anathematizes sundry heretics in particular, and all of them in general; confesses the Virgin Mary to be properly and truly the mother of God; and prays that she may be his helper, his preserver, and protectress all the days of his life. He promises to preserve his flock from the errors of the Latin Church; declares that he has not paid money for the dignity about to be conferred upon him; promises not to go into other dioceses without permission, nor to ordain more than one priest and one deacon at the same service; further, that he will yearly, or at least biennially, visit and inspect his flock; and among other things take care that the homage due to God be not transferred to holy images. He puts on his sakkos and other episcopal garments; and there is delivered to him the *panagion*, or jewel, for the neck; *mantyas*, or ordinary cloak; the cowl, mitre, rosary, and pastoral staff; after which he walks to his house attended by two of the superior clergy.

* 1. On the day of delivery the priest goes to the house, and prays for mother and child; 2, on the eighth day the child should be taken to church to receive its name; and 3, on the fortieth day it should be taken by the mother to be received into the Church, according to the service for the reception of catechumens. In the course of this service the priest breathes in the catechumen's face, pronounces three exorcisms, calls upon the catechumen or his sponsor to blow and spit upon Satan, which he

name of a friend is familiar, one always knows when to congratulate him.

Marriage is counted one of the sacraments or mysteries of the Greek Church, but virginity is taught to be better than wedlock. Priests are commanded, under pain of degradation, not to join in wedlock persons of unsuitable ages, nor those ignorant of the essential articles of the faith, and in no case without due notice given. The Russian Church fixes the age of majority for the bridegroom at twenty-one, or, by permission of parents, as early as eighteen, and sixteen for the bride; it frowns on second and third marriages, and forbids fourth marriages altogether.*

essays to do, not metaphorically, but visibly; after which follows, 4, the administration of baptism, when the candidate is first anointed with oil, then completely immersed three times, then clothed by the priest with a white garment, and a cross is suspended on the neck. Immediately after the baptism follows, 5, confirmation, or anointing of the baptized with chrism on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands, and feet, with the words repeated each time, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost." Prayers are offered, an Epistle and Gospel read, and the benediction pronounced. Eight days after, the candidate is brought again to the church for, 6, the ablution of the chrism. The priest looses the candidate's clothes and girdle, and with a sponge washes the parts that have been anointed; after which follows the last part of the service, namely, 7, the tonsure, in which the priest cuts the hair of the newly baptized in the form of a cross, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

* The marriage service consists of two distinct offices, which are performed at the same time. The first is called the "Betrothal," when rings are given and exchanged; the second is the "Coronation," in which the bride and bridegroom are crowned, and are thrice given wine to drink from a common cup, and thrice led round a lectern on which lie the Gospels. Weddings in Russia are usually celebrated in the evening, and among the friends are persons corresponding to a godfather and godmother, before whom, previous to coming to church, the happy pair kneel in the house, and ask a blessing. The godfather holds in his hand an ikon, usually of Christ, with which he makes the sign of the cross over the head of the bridegroom, and then gives it him to be his peculiar treasure. In old-fashioned places the godmother gives

There are yet other services, such as the so-called sacrament of penance, which closely resembles, but differs in two important respects from, that of the Church of Rome.*

And, again, the Russian sacrament of unction differs in more than one respect from the Roman.†

For the benediction of water there are two offices: the lesser, which is used whenever consecrated water is required, and the greater, which is performed at the Epiphany, in memory of the baptism of Christ, and is carried out with great ceremony. Another office in the Russian Church is that of "Orthodox Sunday,"

the bride a loaf of bread, symbolical of worldly prosperity, making the sign of the cross. The godmother also presents the bride with an ikon, usually of the Virgin Mary; and these two ikons are carried to the church, figure in the wedding ceremony, and are afterwards taken to the new home, to be sacredly preserved for life, and afterwards bequeathed to their children.

* Both Churches require contrition, and also confession. Confession in both Churches begins at the age of seven years, and is a *secret, periodical, compulsory* acknowledgment of mortal sins to a *priest;* but it is made less *complete* in Russia than in Rome—has less of an inquisitorial character; and hence Dean Stanley says, "The scandals, the influence, the terrors of the confessional are alike unknown in the East." The other important difference between the two Churches is, that subsequent exercises of piety, commonly called "penance," when enjoined upon the penitent in the Russian Church, are not performed as *satisfaction* offered to God. This, it will be seen, closes the gate against a great deal of Roman teaching concerning the meritorious value of good works.

† In the East the oil is not previously consecrated by the bishop, but at the time, by seven priests; and, further, whereas extreme unction is not administered by the Romans until the sick person is beyond hope of recovery, the Russians call for the elders of the Church, pray over him, even though the sickness be but slight, and anoint him with oil, in the hope that he may be healed both spiritually and bodily. The service is performed by seven priests (or at the least three), who place a table in the church or house, on which is set a dish with wheat, a vessel for the oil, and seven twigs with cotton tied around, one for each of the priests, who first anoint the sick and subsequently spread the Gospels, with their hands laid thereon, over his head.

which is in form somewhat similar to the English "Commination Service," and in which anathemas are pronounced against those who impugn various articles of the Russian faith. Yet another service is "the Office of the Holy Unction," that is, for preparing the chrism,* and there are other occasional and curious services, such as for the consecration of a church; for an icon or picture; washing the feet on Thursday in Holy Week; prayers on laying the first stone of a house; for seed time; longer offices to be used in drought; earthquake, plague, incursion of barbarians, for children when they commence their education, and many more; but I think that on this head I have said enough.

* This ointment, made of 23 ingredients, can be consecrated only by a bishop, and in Passion Week. It boils three days, with a depth of five fingers of wine below the oil, and priests and deacons by turns read the Gospel day and night, without ceasing, from Monday till Thursday.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SIBERIAN CHURCH (continued).

Parochial clergy.—Their emoluments.—Duties.—Official registers.—Discipline.—Morality.—Status.—Our clerical visits.—Monastic clergy.—The Metropolitan Macarius.—Fasting.—General view of Russian Church.—Compared with Roman.—Teaching respecting Holy Scripture and salvation by faith.—Needs of Russian Church.

THE Russian clergy are of two orders—the parochial and the monastic; or, as they are sometimes called, the white and the black—the secular and the regular clergy. Such was the plethora of them in the time of Peter the Great that they had to restrict the number of ordinations and of those who should serve.* Now, however, there is no superabundance.† Speaking generally, every parish church is under the control of a *prikhod* or corporation, consisting of the priest, deacon, and two *diechoks*, or bell-ringer and reader, and also a widow-woman to prepare the sacramental bread.

* In an Episcopal Church, for instance, there were not to be more than one protopope, two treasurers, five priests, four deacons, two readers, and two sacristans, besides thirty-three choristers. In parishes of large extent there were to be two priests, two deacons, two choristers, and two sacristans, reckoning one priest for every hundred houses.

† On the Amur I heard of merchants and, in exceptional cases, even yemstchiks, being ordained; also of students, for lack of a sufficiency of priests, being ordered deacons at the age of 20 (instead of 22), and sometimes made priests seven days after.

The parish priest may rise to be a protopope or head priest of an Episcopal Church, or one who holds a position in which there are other priests under him; but so long as his wife is living he can go no higher. Should he become a widower, and take the monk's habit, he is then eligible to be made a bishop.*

The pay of the town clergy in Russia is better than of those in the country, where it is very little. The salaries of the Siberian clergy, to judge from the district of the Amur, vary from £125 to £180 a year.† Hence those who have families are miserably poor. It is not uncommon to hear them spoken of as exacting, avaricious, and grasping (such charges are easily made, all

* There are, or were, several curious customs and regulations among the Russian clergy with respect to matrimony. A man cannot join the ranks of the white clergy unless he be "the husband of one wife." Formerly he was obliged, or expected, to marry a priest's daughter; and as a priest's daughter sometimes received her father's living for her dowry, a young priest not infrequently found himself, in this way, settled for life; though, if the father-in-law were old and merely retired, then the son-in-law was expected to keep him. In these arrangements the bishop played a part, for knowing, on one hand, the young men coming forward for ordination, and being kept informed, on the other, regarding the marriageable daughters of his clergy, he could frequently make suggestions for the benefit of all parties concerned. There prevailed, too, in former times in Russia, a pernicious custom, that every clergyman's son was obliged to follow the profession of his father. This is no longer compulsory: and the sons of the clergy, finding themselves free, choose other callings to such an extent that there is now a lack of candidates for the priesthood. Candidates, however, are still drawn for the most part from the homes of the clergy, and from the lower class of merchants. Quite recently, I am informed, a few of the Russian nobility have taken Holy Orders.

† Dr. Neale, in his learned work on the Eastern Church, says, "The Russian clergy never possessed tithes. Their income arises from Easter offerings, fees, and glebe, the minimum of the glebe being 18½ acres, to be divided between four clergy." I have heard that the usual remuneration for a country priest in Russia is from £22 to £25 a year, and his share of the glebe. To these must be added, I suppose, his fees. The town priests receive no regular stipend from Government, but in Petersburg and Moscow the income from some of the parishes amounts to £600,

the world over); but due allowance is not always made for the dire needs of poverty; and they sometimes are obliged almost, if not quite, to beg their bread.*

It must not be supposed, however, that, because the pay of the priests is so small, their duties are light. Of their three daily services, the first often begins between four and five in the morning (fancy that with a thermometer below zero!), vespers at sunset, and the liturgy before mid-day. To these must be added occasional services in district churches or chapels, as well as in houses; at every birth, every death in the parish; when a building is begun, after it has been

or more, to be apportioned amongst several clergy. At a cathedral I attended, I was informed that the protopope, from all sources, received about £500 a year and a house; two priests from £220 to £250 each; the deacon about £180; and the psalmist or diechok from £90 to £150; the whole available sum for all the parish clergy in this cathedral being from £1,500 to £1,800 a year. At another cathedral, in the provinces, I was told that the bishop received £110 from the Government, and £75 from the monastery, with monks as servants free. A correspondent further informs me that metropolitans and archbishops receive "large sums for the maintenance of their house, church, singers, serving monks, and other comforts, of which they can take or leave as much as they like"; the "large sums" quoted, with these not insignificant expenses, being from £625 to £1,250 a year; and this for men who rank ecclesiastically with English primates!

* The Russian priests labour under great social disadvantages. They are less instructed than what are called the "educated classes" of their countrymen, and so do not mingle with them on a social equality; and in many of the towns of the interior, intellectual affairs are on so low a level that the priest's most intelligent companion is the schoolmaster, lately arrived perhaps from the capital with a smattering of neology. In one parish of which I know, the old priest said that the new schoolmaster had been telling him, among other like things, that it was not God who made the world, etc., etc., till the priest hardly knew what was right or otherwise. He could not think what a lay person could possibly find to preach about from a verse out of the Bible. This same priest, when recommended pastorally to visit his flock, said, "I never appear among my people except to ask for corn, milk, and eggs, and thus they hate the sight of me." He had not even a Bible, and said he never possessed one.

repaired, and when it is supposed to be haunted; together with the blessing of school-houses and children before they begin work after the holidays; to say nothing of processions through the streets with miraculous pictures in times of harvest, pestilence, and danger. In Siberia we saw one of these processions, with a picture, lanterns, and flags, leaving a village church at four o'clock in the morning.

But this is not all. There are the church registers to be kept—all the more important because in Russia no one can stir hand or foot without a character paper, which sets forth, with the minutest details, the particulars of his birth, baptism, marriage, etc. These papers have to be signed and countersigned by the priest and deacon, and then to be sent to the bishop's registry, which, in Siberia, may be 1,000 miles away—and all this with an expenditure of stamps, and red tape, and filling up of blank forms that is simply appalling.* Again, every priest has to keep a clerical journal of his official acts as to what he and his fellows do daily. This is for the bishop's assistant; and, should

* One of these blank forms, given me by a protopope, relates to each of the clergy in a particular church. Here are the headings of some of the columns :—

1. Name; place of birth; from what rank in society; where educated, and in what subjects; when promoted to last appointment, by whom, and to what office, whether holding any additional appointment; when and how rewarded for service; whether having a family, and, if so, of what number.

2. What he knows; of what capacity in reading and explaining the catechism, Scriptures, etc.; whether he be a singer; and how many times in the year he has composed his own sermons.

3. His children; their place of education; character; what they are learning; and their behaviour at home.

4. His family relations.

5. Whether he has ever been accused before the court, and how punished; or whether the trial is still pending

the journal be suddenly found not written up to date, the priest is liable to be punished. "How would you be punished?" said I to a protopope. "With a good talking to, perhaps, for the first offence, and for the second a fine, or, it may be, have the delinquency inscribed on my character paper"; in other words, to carry a blot on his escutcheon perhaps for life!

Verily, ecclesiastical discipline, whether in great things or small, is not a dead letter in Russia. Perhaps it is not altogether uncalled for. By it priests are forbidden to find their amusements at the theatre, or in cards, buffoonery, or dancing; and mention is made of another evil greater than these, in which we shall recognize an old foe, too well known in England. It is drink!*

It is not matter for surprise, then, that the status of the Russian clergy is low, as it was in England when

* The excellent Russian book on the duty of parish priests, speaking of drunkenness fifty years ago, says, "Yet though drunkenness is a sin so grievous and deadly, there are very many in our time who scarcely pass a day without indulging their sottish passion for drink. Wherefore . . the councils forbid . . . all clerks . . . so much as to enter a tavern, under pain of deprivation and excommunication." This is a painful and humiliating subject, though the more respectable amongst the Russians regard the matter in various lights. Some, of course, condemn such priests unmercifully. One man told me he had not communicated for several years; "for," said he, "how can I in the morning receive the sacrament from the hands of my country priest when I know that before night he will probably be inebriated?" To which some, in effect, reply that he should look at the *light* and not only at the *lantern;* as a religious general said to me, "If my priest supplies me properly with the ordinances of the Church, I am not concerned with his private life—that lies between God and his own soul." Others, again, make allowance for their great temptations. On five festivals in the year, at least, such as Christmas, New Year, Easter, etc., the priest is supposed to go the round of his parish and say a prayer in every house; and on these festive occasions refreshment stands on the sideboard, and *vodka*, or spirits, is offered as drink—the evil results of which, among clergy and laity, on one of the festivals, I myself could not but observe.

Christianity had existed no longer here than it now has in Russia—say in the fourteenth century, when Chaucer wrote his "Canterbury Tales." We have no room for boasting; nor are these remarks made with any idea of drawing unfavourable comparisons, but only to give a true picture of a large class of the Russian ecclesiastics. I called upon some few of the priests in Siberia, who, like the peasants, seemed decidedly superior to, and better off than, those in Russia. On arriving at a post-station, I not unfrequently sent for or called upon the priest, gave him tracts to circulate in his parish, and offered to sell him, at a reduced rate, portions of Scripture for distribution, which offer was almost always accepted.

Let me now pass to the monastic clergy, who alone fill all the higher offices in the Russian Church. Among the monastic clergy are many scholars. The present Metropolitan (Macarius) of Moscow, formerly a professor at the Academy, may be selected as a bright example. He has written extensively, and, from the very outset of his literary career, is said to have resolved to devote all the money derived from his works to the progress of knowledge. He has founded scholarships and prizes at Kieff, Petersburg, and Vilna, and as long ago as 1867 he possessed a capital of £12,000, the interest of which is distributed yearly in premiums for the best compositions in the Russian language. It was this amiable dignitary, as related in my first chapter, whom I had the honour of visiting when passing through Petersburg. Other things might be said to the praise of many of the Russian clergy—notably their simple manner of living. In none of their houses that I entered in Siberia was there the least approach to

luxury, and the library of one of the best priests I met was all too scanty for the literary work he had in hand. I remember, too, that I entered the sleeping-room of the archimandrite (who is also the Metropolitan of Moscow) at the "Skit," near the Troitza monastery, and found a chamber that would be thought not too well furnished for a guest in an average English rectory. Further, in Russia, both orders of clergy fast at least 226 days in the year; and the monastic clergy, which includes all the bishops, never eat flesh at all. I met with a practical illustration of the strictness with which the clergy abstain from forbidden food. At a post station where we stopped, and where the priest had come to us, we invited him to drink tea, and I cut for him a slice of white bread and buttered it. This he declined, as it was a fast-day, and butter was forbidden. I then offered him a slice of bread; but another difficulty arose, for, having to lay in a large stock of white bread at the previous town, we had requested the baker to put in a little butter to keep it moist. The good man's conscience therefore, he felt, would be defiled even by this, and so I was obliged to call for black bread wherewith to entertain our fasting guest.*

Something must be said of the Russian monasteries for women and men. They are of three sorts: Lavra, of which there are only three, namely, at Kieff, Petersburg, and Troitza, near Moscow; next are those called "Cœnobia"; and, lastly, others called "Stauropegia."

* There are four great fasts in the year, during which are eaten only bread, vegetables, and fish: 1. Lent; 2. St. Peter's fast, from Whit-Monday to the 29th June; 3. Fast of the Virgin Mary, from August 1st to 15th; and 4. St. Philip's fast, from November 15th to December 26th. Wednesday and Friday also are fast-days.

Their general characteristics are Egyptian rather than Roman.*

One of the monks of the Yuryef Monastery, near Novgorod, gave me the following outline of their daily life: They rise at half-past two (one o'clock on

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festivals), go to church till six, and from six till

* The Lavra of Egypt are supposed to have been collections of tents in the deserts, where each provided for himself, but joined the rest in common devotions. Cœnobia were institutions where all lived associated. The discipline is the same in all three, but the Stauropegia are under the direct jurisdiction, not of the bishops, but of the Synod. Dr. Neale gives the numbers of Russian monasteries for men at 435, and for women, 113. My almanack mentions a gross total of 472. Greek monks need not be

nine they sleep. Then they go to church again for an hour and a half, and afterwards breakfast. This over, they are free to sleep or do as they please till five in the afternoon, when evening service brings them together for an hour and a half, after which they sup and go to bed. They have but two meals a day, never eat flesh, and, when observing the fasts, eat vegetables only.

To sum up, then, all that need here be said of the Russian Church—very different thoughts arise according as one looks at the every-day religion of the people, or their formularies and theology. The former may cause pain and grief, the latter excite sympathy and hope; and it will be my object in the remainder of this

ecclesiastics, and are all of the order of St. Basil. The head of a large monastery is called an archimandrite (or abbot); of a smaller monastery, a hegumen (or prior), whilst the lady superior of a monastery for women is called a hegumena. There are monk priests, and also monk deacons, and in the churches attached to the nunneries a large part of the service is performed by the nuns. Among the Russian monks, according to Dr. King, are three degrees: novices, who should serve three years; the proficients, who wear the lesser habit; and the perfect, who wear the greater or angelic habit, which last are said to be uncommon in Russia. Men are not admitted to be monks till 30 years of age, and nuns do not receive the tonsure till 60, or at least 50. Younger women may enter as probationers; but they take no vow, and are at liberty to leave and be married. Probationers, whether men or women, wear a black velvet hat without a brim, and the men a black cassock. Proficients have a black veil attached to the hat (with metropolitans this is white), and monastics of the third degree always wear the veil or hood down, and never suffer their faces to be seen. In the time of Peter the Great the monasteries had become homes for the idle, and he issued many salutary rules concerning them. Monastics were to confess and receive the communion four times a year, though they were not compelled to confess to their own superior. They were to avoid idleness; were not allowed (with the exception of the superior, the aged, and infirm) to keep servants; were not to receive or pay visits without permission; and in all monasteries the monks were to be strictly kept to the study of the Bible, the most learned were to explain it, and such only were to be promoted to offices and dignities.

chapter to expand these thoughts in a fair and honest way, without sparing blame or withholding praise.

Most persons, who have had the opportunity of observing, allow that the Russians are a religious people. One sees this not only in the large numbers both of men and women who attend the churches, but also in the tens of thousands who yearly go on pilgrimage to sacred places. The monks of Troitza sometimes have in summer, on a feast day, a thousand guests. Some, of course, are idle wanderers, going from place to place to get food; but many walk hundreds—nay, thousands—of miles to redeem a vow or offer a prayer for something specially desired. Much of this, no doubt, is eminently unspiritual and superstitious. Much of their worship is perilously like, if not altogether, idolatry; yet it should be remembered that the average Russian knows no better; and what can be expected of the peasant, if the highest authorities of the land, on arriving at a city, make it their first object to pay their devotions, if not, as at Ephesus, before "the image which fell down from Jupiter," yet before a picture to which is attributed miraculous powers? We can at least admire, however, the intention in these things; and if the Russian peasant can only be kept sober, he displays a number of virtues, some of which are not found so abundantly in other and more advanced countries. They are a kind, a generous, and a hospitable people, by no means unmindful of philanthropic effort, and at least, we may add, intensely ecclesiastical.

Again, there is much to admire in the formularies of their Church, although Dean Stanley brings against it, and justly, three weighty charges—extravagant ritual,

excessive dogmatism, and a fatal division between religion and morality. When, however, the Russian Church is compared with the Roman, and spoken of as like it, certain considerations should be borne in mind which make the comparison result in favour of the former. Russia did not receive the religion of Jesus Christ in its purity. The merest tyro in Church history knows that when the stream of Christianity had flowed down to the tenth century, it was no longer pure as at its source. But follow the stream as it branches east and west, and observe which of the two remains the purer.* And if this be said to be *negative*, and much of it belonging to the past, then other considerations may be adduced which seem to bring the Greek Church nearer to the English than many suppose, and notably so in two vital points, namely, the attitude of the Russian Church to the Holy Scriptures, †

* When clerical celibacy, for instance, was imposed in the West, it was not followed in the East, nor was the cup denied to the Russian laity when it was withheld from the Roman. The Russian Church never fabricated a purgatory, and then sold indulgences to get people out of it. The Eastern Church has never added uncatholic articles to the Nicene Creed, as in that of Pope Pius the Fourth, and issued the whole as binding upon all who would be saved. Again, the errors of the East have at least the stamp of antiquity. They have not added to the Christian faith novel articles, such as the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, or still less claimed a supremacy and infallibility which in the early Christian councils would need only to have been mentioned to have been scouted; but in a very real sense it may be said that Russia has kept the faith as she received it.

† It may surprise some, as I confess it at first surprised me, to learn the place the Russian Church gives to the Bible in her "Treatise on the Duty of Parish Priests,"—a book by two Russian bishops, which has been adopted by the whole Sclavonian Church, and which all candidates for orders are required to have read, and to show their acquaintance with before being ordained. The book begins by saying that "to teach the people is the priest's very first duty," and then (VII.) that the priest is to teach the faith and the law; that (IX.) "all the articles of faith are contained in the Word of God—that is, in the books of the Old and New Testament"; and that (XI.) "none other books are to be held by us as Divine Scriptures, or called

and her doctrine respecting salvation through Christ alone.* She does not forbid or hide the Scriptures from the people, even if she neglects them, nor has she stereotyped her errors by the claim to infallibility. There is room, therefore, to hope for a change for the better, which in my humble opinion should be attempted from within, by a wider circulation and more general study of the Scriptures; next, by a vastly increased amount of good and Scriptural preaching; and, once more, by a powerful attack on the prevailing sin of intemperance. Would the priests only endeavour to instil into their people, respecting drink, half the abstemiousness and self-denial that they teach them to observe concerning forbidden food, they would render Russia such a service as I have no words to express.

the Word of God, than the two volumes of the Old and New Testaments.' Again (XIII.), that "the writings of the Holy Fathers are of great use. . . . But neither the writings of the Holy Fathers, nor the traditions of the Church, are to be confounded or equalled with the Word of God and His commandments; for the Word of God is one thing, but the writings of the Holy Fathers and traditions ecclesiastical are another." And further (XXXII.), "So great being this work of teaching, etc. . . . we cannot fail to see how needful it is for the priest to abound both in word and in wisdom, in order to the well-fulfilling of this his vast duty; and the only way hereto is that he be skilled and nourished up from a child in Holy Scripture."

* The "Treatise on the Duty of Parish Priests" reads (XXIX.): "Since the sole beginner and perfecter of our holy faith and of everlasting salvation is our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. xii. 2), and there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but only His (Acts iv. 12), . . . it is plain that in each of the above kinds of teaching, the priest ought to instil the knowledge of Christ Jesus, inculcate His doctrine, dwell on His exceeding compassion, and possess the soul with this truth, that Christ *alone is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption* (1 Cor. i. 30). . . . In every case, I say, according to circumstances, he can implant, and is in duty bound to implant, the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and so all instruction, and every particular instruction, should be grounded on Christ; for all that can be either written or said in reference to the faith, and to everlasting happiness, if it be not grounded on faith in Christ, is unfruitful, and can never save.'

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM TOMSK TO KRASNOIARSK.

Book-distribution in Western Siberia.—Departure from Tomsk.—Post-bells.—How to sit in posting.—Sleeping.—Boundary of Western Siberia.—Wild and domesticated animals.—Birds.—Scenery.—Road-side villages.—Peasants' houses.—Hammering up "the Prodigal Son."—Siberian towns.—Houses of upper classes.—Misadventures.—A hospitable merchant.—Frontier of Eastern Siberia.

I HAVE said that, on returning to Tomsk, we found the remainder of our books arrived. The reader may like to know how we had prospered in relation to their distribution through Western Siberia. Our singular mission greatly puzzled the Russians. I have since heard how it reached the ears of the worthy Archbishop of Tobolsk that a strange Englishman had been through the district, leaving thousands of books to be given away. Like a watchful shepherd, his first anxiety was to see that they contained no heresy. Having examined the books, however, and perused a set of the tracts, he found them exceedingly good, and would by no means put anything in the way of their distribution; but, said his Eminence, "Those English are a queer lot, and there must surely be some ulterior motive behind it." To the same effect were many of the officials' cogitations as they oozed out and reached me from time to time. We met with no opposition, however, or even questioning of what we

were doing. The fact that the revolutionists have sometimes distributed seditious leaflets inside pamphlets approved by the censor makes the police on the alert in European Russia; but I have usually found even there, so long as all was clear and aboveboard, that the authorities were willing to forward my endeavours; and I so far availed myself of this willingness in Siberia as to distribute more through the authorities than formerly, and less in proportion with our own hands. Still, we gave an immense number personally, and many also we sold, on the principle that a man values most what he pays for. At each of the towns and villages on the Obi we made up parcels and sent them with a note to the parish priest, asking him to distribute the books gratuitously. As the periodical—*The Russian Workman*—could be had post-free for a rouble a year, many said they should get it. One man intimated that he should write for 50 copies forthwith, and another that he should get the same number of subscribers in his neighbourhood, on the Lower Obi, where he had built a little church, and had had his son instructed to read to the people. Our greatest success, however, in Western Siberia, and one that would have repaid us for all our trouble, has since proved to be the plans laid at Tiumen, through which town, as observed before, some 18,000 exiles pass yearly. From data given me in the prison, we had calculated that there would be about 2,000 pass during the summer who could read, and for these I left 1,980 Russian Scripture portions, 36 Polish, German, French, Tatar, and Mongolian Scriptures, 546 copies of the *Rooski Rabotchi*, and 2,520 tracts. The exiles going east are sent

away in the barge weekly, and, before the party starts, a religious service is held by a priest at Tiumen. I have since heard that after this service, throughout the summer, our books were distributed; so that I trust they are now to be found not only among the convicts in prisons, but also with those who have been sent to live free, but in comparative solitude, in the furthest corners of the country.

Some have shaken their heads and said that the men would sell the books, and make cigarettes of the tracts. This, however, I doubt; but, even if it be so, it may simply mean, in the case of the Scriptures, that a book has passed from the hands of one who did not care for it to those of one who does. But the Russians have great respect, amounting almost to superstition, for what they call "holy books"; and such books are a great deal too scarce to allow of their being generally uncared for. Moreover, in Siberia, books of this character and tracts are *new*. In European Russia, many, on receiving the books, said they had no idea there were such publications in existence; and we had cases in Asia of soldiers giving their last kopeck to get a copy of the Gospels, the Psalms, or the New Testament.

Before leaving Tomsk we gave the Governor books for the public institutions of his government, and left with him boxes to be forwarded to the residence of the Governor-General Kaznakoff, at Omsk. I had been made acquainted with this latter officer, both officially and privately, in Petersburg, and had been invited to call upon him on my return through Omsk, to be introduced to his family. The general had told me also to telegraph to him in case I got into prison,

or in the event of any other small casualty, and I looked forward with pleasure to my visit; but with my subsequent change of plans, I wrote asking that the books I had sent might be distributed in the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk, and thus finished arrangements for the supply of the public institutions in all the four provinces of Western Siberia: our total distribution thus far being 4,000 Scriptures and 9,000 pamphlets and tracts.

We now prepared to drive into Eastern Siberia, and on Thursday evening, June 19th, galloped out of Tomsk in two troikas, containing ourselves and baggage—the latter reduced, but still a heavy load. Outside the town the tongues of our horses' bells were unloosed, and we jingled merrily along. The said bells are placed beneath the *douga*, over the centre horse, and are intended to give notice to the public generally, and all whom it may concern, that *post*-horses are coming, and, accordingly, that it is their bounden duty to get out of the way. If they fail to do this, which is sometimes the case, especially at night, when the drivers of slow-going vehicles are nodding on their seats, then "the rule of the road" is that the post-boy may give them a cut with his whip—a visitation inflicted sometimes upon men, and sometimes, with caravans, upon the leading horse, which, in his driver's absence or sleep, is supposed to know the side of the road he ought to take.

We were now becoming accustomed to our jolting mode of travel, and I had already discovered a secret in connection therewith worth handing down to posterity. It concerns the position of the body and legs in the tarantass. If you place your heels against the

front of the vehicle, or against a bag or box, your feet become excessively tired; and if you lie at full length, flat, you may soon imagine yourself in a ship's berth, rolling from side to side. Now, my golden secret is this: First secure to yourself (in a hole if possible) a soft, springy base upon which to sit, and then place on that a ribbed circular air-cushion. Secondly, put your down-pillow behind at an angle of 60 degrees, and, if you like, an air-pillow, without ribs, in the nape of your neck. But the next arrangement is the most important. Draw up your legs till the knees come on a level with your chin; then put beneath the knee-pits a soft parcel or bag, sufficiently high to leave the feet dangling above the ground; and the result will be that you will travel with comparative comfort by night and by day continuously for 1,000 miles. Being thus fixed before and behind, and kept laterally straight by the side of the vehicle and your companion, the only direction in which you can be shot is upwards and heavenwards, to come down, alas! on the old spot; and this must be accepted as your minimum amount of local disturbance. The reader may think it utterly impossible to sleep under such circumstances—and at first it is so. But Nature will assert her claims. A Siberian priest told us that, when he travelled from Europe, he could not at first sleep at all in the tarantass; but that, when at last he did so, he lost no less than three hats whilst wrapped in slumber. As for myself, I soon learnt to doze; and in my journal of June 21st I find the entry, "Managed to sleep quite soundly in the tarantass till 8 o'clock this morning." It was not always, however, one could sleep the whole night through; and I recollect on one occasion awaking

from a beautiful dream of pleasant society in an English drawing-room to find myself, to my disgust, outside a Siberian post-house. On another occasion I had been sleeping soundly, and, on looking out early in the morning, found that the driver had followed my example; and the horses, not feeling the lash, had followed suit, and so we had come to a standstill, and all were slumbering together. I gave the man, however (to confess it for once), a dig in the back; his whip fell on the horses, and they galloped in style to the end of the stage.

On the third day after leaving Tomsk, we approached the boundary that divides Western from Eastern Siberia; but up to this point we had not met with a large number of wild animals. No wolves came alongside the tarantass as they did last year in the Caucasus, nor did we so much as catch sight of a bear, as on my journey from Archangel.* As to domesticated animals, large herds of cows were seen, and milk was abundant. Strange to say, however, the people make little or no cheese; and the peasants do not usually butter their bread. Their fresh butter, when they make it, is without salt, and is generally used for cooking. The pigs of the country are a long-legged breed, and are frequently seen running about the village streets. They furnish the long bristles from their mane which are used for making brooms.

* Mr. Atkinson gives the following list of mammalia as inhabiting Siberia:—The reindeer, stag, roebuck, elk; the argali, or wild sheep, and wild boar; the jackal, wolf, tiger, and bear; the Corsac and Arctic foxes; the lynx, glutton, and polecat; the beaver, otter, badger, hedgehog, ermine, Arctic hare; sable; flying, striped, and common squirrels; the Siberian and common marmots; the water and common rats; the mouse, bat, and mole.

We saw no lack of birds of prey in Western Siberia, for hawks of various kinds are seen sailing gracefully over every town. We met with the largest number of sportsmen's birds between Tiumen and Tobolsk, chiefly water-birds, with wild ducks and geese in abundance. I tasted at Ekaterineburg the *gluchar*, or cock of the wood, the same as our capercailzie. It was a well-tasted bird, from whose breast ten persons were helped, and it may be bought in the winter at Ekaterineburg for 8*d*. In the Altai regions is found a magnificent eagle called the bearcoot, of which specimens are shown in the Barnaul Museum. It is strong enough to kill a deer with ease; and it not unfrequently happens that, when wolves have killed and begun to eat their prey, a pair of bearcoots will attack and kill or drive them away, and eat their intended meal. The Kirghese tame these birds for the purpose of hunting.

As we pursued our way towards Eastern Siberia, there was a slight improvement in the landscape. For a long distance, after leaving Tomsk, the country was flat; but in the direction of Krasnoiarsk was seen a range of hills to the south, dotted with pine-trees, the country looking English-like and fertile, well wooded, and here and there under cultivation. Hitherto the herbage had been singularly luxuriant; but, from the station next before Atchinsk, pasture became less plentiful, and thus, in a measure, explained why henceforth our hire of horses was to cost us double. The number of towns and villages along the road for the first 400 miles of the way—that is, from Tomsk to Krasnoiarsk—was more numerous than might be expected, though, the further east we went, the further apart they were.

The post-houses were rarely more than from ten to fifteen miles distant from one another, and we frequently drove through two or three intervening villages. To describe one village is to describe them all—the chief difference being that whilst each consists of a single street, with detached houses on either side of the way, some villages are larger than others. One we passed through was said to be nearly three miles long. The said street is usually wide, but never by any chance paved, though now and then a few boards are laid down for a footway. Nor is the street usually beautified with anything worthy the name of a garden. Now and then a few trees are planted in front of a house, but with such a high, clumsy pallisade to keep off the cattle, that the attempted cultivation of beauty becomes rather a disfigurement than otherwise. The priest's house is often one of the best in the place. So, again, the post-house usually stands out prominently; and if there happen to be any Government official in the village, an extra coat of paint, or some little ornamentation about the exterior, may point out the house inhabited by superiors; but ordinarily the houses of the peasants or farmers are very much alike. The foundation may perchance be of stone, but all else is of wood. For the walls, trees are cut and barked, slightly flattened by being cut away on two opposite sides, and then laid one above the other, the ends being dovetailed together at the corners. The interstices between the logs are calked with moss, and the roof is generally of overlapping boards. So long as the foundation holds good, the houses look tolerably neat; but when this begins to give, or the logs to rot, they become strained and warped in so many

directions as to present a very dilapidated appearance. When the houses are intended for the accommodation of human beings only, they generally have no second storey; but in the case of farm-houses, where cattle are sheltered, we frequently found them having an upper storey approached by an outside staircase. There were usually also out-houses adjoining, and under the same roof; so that one had but to leave the dwelling-room upstairs, cross a passage, and open a door, to find oneself looking down upon beasts and cattle, and other denizens of a farm-yard, which share the same roof, though not, like the Irish pig, the same apartments as their owners. The interior of the house is as simple as the outside. In the centre is a brick stove. The walls are whitewashed or papered, and adorned with pictures according to the means and taste of the owners. Portraits of the Imperial family figure largely, so do battle scenes, pictures of the saints, and family photographs. As already observed, I took with me a large number of illustrated prints of "The Prodigal Son," round which was written the parable in Russ. Having provided myself with a hammer and tacks, I was wont to go into the guest-room at the post-houses, and there nail up the picture, to the great admiration usually of the post-master. I have heard from a gentleman, who has recently crossed Siberia, that these pictures still adorn the walls of the post-houses, and that the books given with them are carefully preserved. My action, however, was not always understood at first, especially by those who could not read. One woman, who saw only an early stage of my operations, ran off to her husband as frightened as if I had been nailing up an Imperial

ukase. They usually proceeded at once to read the parable; some said they should have it framed; and one post-master, a Jew, said in German, as he finished reading, that it was "a right good story."

What has been said of Siberian houses thus far refers more especially to the houses of the peasantry and their villages. The traveller, however, from Tomsk passes certain small towns which have cross streets, wooden footways, perchance a small hospital, and the residence of an ispravnik, or a few well-to-do merchants. On entering the dwelling of one of these classes, one finds large rooms, papered walls, and painted floors, with perhaps a square of carpet near the sofa and table. Things look plain but comfortable within; and the out-houses, such as kitchen and bath-house, are at a convenient distance in the yard. The liability of the kitchen to catch fire partly accounts for its being detached; and these out-houses serve as a residence for the servants.

Houses occupied by persons highest in position, such as governors of provinces, and high military officers, are also of wood, and often without a second storey; but the rooms are more spacious and *en suite*, enlivened with flowers and creepers, and the tables enriched by articles of *virtu* from Europe. It is interesting to an Englishman to see how many things from London find their way to these remote regions. Thus, when sitting at a desk, one finds oneself among Cumberland leads and Perry's coloured pencils, and a dozen other trifles, reminders of home.

Our journey from Tomsk to Krasnoiarsk was not entirely devoid of incident, our misadventures being connected for the most part with a limping wheel

Our first misadventure happened in returning from Barnaul, when, in the middle of the night, in the midst of a field, one of our shafts broke. But this might have happened anywhere; and fortunately there happened to be a man resting by the roadside to feed his horses, who lent us his pole to go to the next station. Early in the morning, however, it was discovered that our Siberian Jehu had been driving so furiously that, like Phaëton, his classical ancestor, he had set the wheels on fire. Matters were made worse for want of a smith at hand; and when we found a smith, he had no coal. We applied, therefore, a liberal allowance of grease, and limped on to Tomsk, where the whole concern was supposed to be put in order and cleaned, with the addition of new shafts and mended wheels, at a cost of nearly £2. We had not travelled four-and-twenty hours before the wheel was again on fire, and we paid several shillings for the repair of the axletree; a little further on, 24*s.* more; and then, on the evening of the third day, we arrived at a village where lived a smith. Now this man was well known in the district as an extortioner. He came to us clad in a pea-green dressing-gown, and smoked a cigarette as he leisurely walked round the tarantass, just as a man surveys a horse. He informed us that he would put us right for £5, which we flatly refused to give. "But you will certainly break down if you proceed," urged the extortioner. "Then," said I, "if we do, we will not come to *you* for assistance." Said some of the people, "You had better go on to the next station at Bogotol, where there lives a merchant named So-and-so; and if you ask him he will recommend you to an honest wheelwright." With our

spokes roped together, therefore, and wetted, we waddled on, and arrived at Bogotol between three and four in the morning.

"Is the merchant So-and-so at home?" was the first question we asked at the post-house. "Yes," said they; "but he is asleep, and will get up for nobody." "Indeed," said I to my interpreter, "will you go to him and say as politely as you can that an Englishman travelling to Irkutsk has met with an accident, and will be greatly obliged if he can recommend him an honest wheelwright?" And off went Mr. Interpreter, with a glum countenance, evidently not liking his job. He knocked at the merchant's door, expecting to get roundly abused for his intrusion. But the merchant, on ascertaining what was the matter, asked the stranger in, and shouted to his servants, Peter, Timothy, and John, to bestir themselves. One he sent for the wheelwright, another to heat the samovar, and a third to prepare some food; and then, said he, "I cannot think of letting you go till the wheelwright comes, and all is going well"; after which he plied his visitor with talk, telling him what a famous place was Siberia; that any one might come in his neighbourhood, and, without payment, till as much land or cut as much grass as he liked, no man forbidding him; though labour, he added, was scarce, and imported goods dear. Thus, after tea and talk, and the arrival of the workman, the merchant returned to his slumbers. But I thought this one of the finest examples of hospitality and kindness to strangers I had ever met with, and I wondered much whether a broken-down Russian traveller, knocking up an Englishman at four in the morning, and asking to be recommended to an honest wheelwright, would have received

a kindlier reception. The honest wheelwright mended us up for a few shillings, and, after calling to thank the merchant, we started, and about noon reached Krasnorechinska. Here we called upon the priest, who had 3,000 parishioners, of whom he said 200 could read, for whom we gave him some pamphlets, and sold him four New Testaments. He possessed a large Russian Bible, which cost upwards of six shillings, and was, he said, the cheapest to be had.

By night we reached Atchinsk, the first station in Eastern Siberia, and although the roads were perceptibly better immediately we crossed the border, our poor wheel was out of trim again, and threatened to detain us far into the morrow. And now came sundry physicians to administer advice, chiefly, however, in their own favour. One wished to sell us a new wheel for £1, another to make an exchange of our two front wheels for £2, and so on; in answer to which I declared that I would go straight to the Ispravnik and show my grand letter from Petersburg. "But," urged Mr. Interpreter, "the Ispravnik has nothing to do with mending wheels!" "True," I replied; but—"Let us go!" And so we did, and were kindly received. "If your axletrees are of iron," said the Ispravnik, "I doubt whether there are any persons in the place capable of mending them; but, even if there are, they will most likely be drunk, as to-day is a *fête;* and you must therefore wait till to-morrow.' I pleaded, however that he should do his best, and things turned out better than he prophesied. A wheelwright was found, who for half-a-crown enabled us to proceed, and early next morning we reached Krasnoiarsk.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE YENESEI.

Sources of the river.—Discoveries of Wiggins and Nordenskjold.—The Yenesei at Krasnoiarsk.—Current, width, depth.—Breaking up of ice.—The Yeneseisk province.—Geography.—Meteorology.—Forests.—Timber.—Fish of Yenesei.—Birds.—Russian population.—Navigation.—Corn and cattle.—Towns.—A Scoptsi village.—Salubrity of climate.—The aborigines.—Ethnology.—Tunguses.—Fur-bearing animals.—Methods of hunting.—Minerals.

THE most remarkable of the natural features of the Yeneseisk province is its wonderful river, the Yenesei,* much of our knowledge of which, below Krasnoiarsk, we owe to the discoveries of Wiggins and Seebohm, Nordenskjold and Théel, all of whose information has come to us within the past seven years.†

As I stood on the banks of the Yenesei at Krasnoiarsk, it appeared to me the most majestic stream I

* Its most distant sources rise under another name in Mongolia, on the eastern side of the Khangai mountains, whence the Selenga and the Orkhon, flowing together into Lake Baikal, emerge as the Angara, which flows into the Yenesei proper near the town of Yeneseisk. The stream that is *called* the Yenesei, however, rises in the Tannu range of the Altai mountains, whence it bursts through the Sayansk chain in cataracts and rapids, and enters Siberia south of Minusinsk; and then, flowing on beyond Krasnoiarsk, it is joined by the Angara, the Lower and Upper Tunguska, and the Kureika, all flowing in on the right bank. The Russians give its length as 3,472 miles, thus making the Yenesei the fourth longest river in the world, being exceeded only by the Nile, the Amazon, and the Mississippi.

† *See* Appendix D.

had ever beheld; and, when looking at the rush of its waters, I was thankful that we had attempted nothing so rash as to descend by a raft on its bosom; for, however pleasant a method of travelling from Minusinsk this might be in summer, it would be nothing short of madness to attempt it during the spring floods. Some idea of the swiftness of the current may be gathered from the report of M. Théel, who says that, including stoppages and without rowing, they were carried in their boat from Krasnoiarsk to Yeneseisk, a distance of 300 miles, in 2½ days; that is to say, they floated down the stream at just about the same speed as we attained with three horses at our best travelling, namely, 130 miles in a day and night. Allowing for stoppages, they floated at the rate of seven miles an hour. Dr. Peacock, who lives at Krasnoiarsk, informed me that the river in quiet places has a current of five miles an hour; in swifter places of 10 miles, and in some very rapid parts of 17 miles an hour; but this last may perchance refer to the two rapids, through one of which M. Théel's party had to shoot at Padporoschensk, about 170 miles below Krasnoiarsk, and the other, of which Mr. Seebohm speaks as remaining unfrozen all the winter through.*

I imagine that the grandest thing to be witnessed on the Lower Yenesei is the breaking-up of the ice,

* The gigantic proportions of the Yenesei will be further realized from its width, which at Krasnoiarsk, 1,700 miles from the sea, is more than 1,000 yards, and at Yeneseisk it measures rather more than a mile. From thence it widens gradually, so that at the Kureika it enlarges to about three miles; and between Tolstonosovsk and Goltchikha it expands like a lake with a breadth of more than 40 miles. The delta and lagoon formed by its waters are about 400 miles in length. The depth of the river varies, of course, according to the season, but opposite Dudinsk M. Théel's sounding-line indicated a depth of 12 fathoms. The river has a fall of

which Mr. Seebohm has described as he saw it in 1877. Proceeding down the river on the ice with Captain Wiggins, they reached the ship *Thames* in her winter quarters near the confluence of the Kureika with the Yenesei, and were quietly waiting for the opening of the navigation, when on the 1st of June commenced what Mr. Seebohm calls the "battle of the Yenesei." The pressure underneath caused a large field of ice to break away, which, by collision with an angular point of the bank, resulted in the piling up of a little range of ice mountains 50 or 60 feet high, and picturesque in the extreme. Huge blocks of ice, six feet thick and 20 feet long, were seen standing perpendicularly, whilst others were crushed up in fragments like broken pottery. Some were white, and some clear as glass, and blue as an Italian sky. Then the river began to rise, and in the course of the night the whole crust of the Yenesei, as far as could be seen, broke up with a tremendous crash, and a dense mass of ice-floes and pack-ice rushed irresistibly up the Kureika, driving the poor ship like a toy before it, and leaving it in the evening, amidst huge hummocks of ice, almost high and dry. The velocity of these masses of pack-ice on the Yenesei was reckoned on some days to be not less than 20 miles an hour. This sort of thing continued for a fortnight, and during two days it was calculated

4,000 feet, and the banks generally are steep and lofty, from 60 to 100 feet above the water. Thus it would seem that comparatively little land is covered by the summer floods, which is just the reverse in the case of the Obi. M. Théel observes, however, that it frequently happens, when one bank is high, the other is low, from which it follows that the vegetation on either side assumes a somewhat different character; for where the bank is low, and consequently exposed to inundations, one sees abundance of willows, whilst the higher bank is very often covered with fir, pine, and larch.

that 50,000 acres of ice passed the ship up the constantly changing Kureika, which alternately rose and fell. Many square miles of ice were marched up for some hours, and then marched back again. Sometimes the pack-ice and floes were jammed so tightly together that it looked as if one might scramble across the river without much difficulty. At other times there was a good deal of open water, and the icebergs "calved" as they went along, with much commotion and splashing, that could be heard a mile off. Underlayers of icebergs grounded, and after the velocity of the enormous mass had caused it to pass on, the "calves," or pieces left behind, rose to the surface like whales coming up to breathe. Some of them must have done so from a good depth, for they rose out of the water with a considerable splash, and rocked about for some time before settling down to their floating level. At last took place the final march past of the beaten winter forces in this great 14 days' "battle," and for seven days more came slowly down the stragglers of the great Arctic army—worn and weather-beaten little icebergs, dirty ice-floes looking like mudbanks, and broken pack-ice in the last stage of destruction—after which the river was found to have risen to a height of 70 feet.

To proceed, however, from the river to the basin through which it flows. The Yenesei gives its name to Yeneseisk, that central Siberian province which is bounded on the west by the governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk, and on the east by those of Yakutsk and Irkutsk. It is the only province that stretches across the country from the Altai range to the Arctic Ocean, a distance from north to south of nearly 2,000 miles; or, to put it in another way, it extends from the latitude of London

to that of the most northerly point of Asia, within 14 degrees of the North Pole.*

The province is divided into six uyezds, with six principal towns, viz., Krasnoiarsk, Minusinsk, Yeneseisk, Kansk, Atchinsk, and Turukhansk. The differences of temperature between its various parts are, of course, very great. The southern portions about Minusinsk we heard spoken of as the Italy of Siberia; and at Krasnoiarsk, towards the end of June, we found the temperature like that of an English summer. Further north, at Yeneseisk, the greatest heat of the year 1877 (registered in June) was 92·5, whilst the greatest cold sunk to 59·2 below zero. This cold was exceeded in December of the same year at Turukhansk, where the thermometer sank to 63·0 below zero.

The province is covered with magnificent forests up to the Arctic Circle, but the trees rapidly diminish in size further north, and disappear soon after lat. 69°. These forests are principally of pine. In the neighbourhood of Krasnoiarsk the pine and the larch attain to colossal dimensions. The pine frequently rises to 200 feet in height, but is never more than six feet in

* The province has an area of nearly a million square miles—that is to say, is somewhat larger than the aggregate surface covered by Austria, France, Russia, Spain, and all the British possessions in Europe. The southern part only is mountainous, all above the 60th parallel being flat and swampy. It has some half-dozen large and thousands of smaller lakes in the *tundras* of the north, and the province is well watered by the Yenesei and its larger affluents,—namely, the Angara, the Podkamennaia (or stony) Tunguska, the Nijnaia (or lower) Tunguska, and the Kureika. In 1873 the population was thus classified: hereditary nobles, 800; personally noble, 1,600; ecclesiastical persons of all sorts, 4,000; townspeople, 20,000; rural population, 232,000; military, 15,000; foreigners, 42; and others, probably aborigines, 122,000. The total population in 1880 was 372,000, or about three-fourths of the population of Liverpool.

diameter at the base. The larch, which has the furthest northern range, sometimes attains to the same height, but its diameter is but four feet on the surface of the ground.*

The forests abound with animal life, as do the rivers with fish. Fish forms the principal food of the natives, and in summer almost every one is a fisherman, using nets and lines, or spearing by torchlight. In the Yenesei are found pike, ruff, perch, and tench, all which are little esteemed, and serve as food for the dogs. The more valued are the sturgeon, salmon, and various species of the genus *Coregonus*. The common sturgeon is caught along the whole Yenesei, and sometimes weighs more than 200 lbs. The sterlet

* The larch is called in Russ *listvenitsa* (from *list*, a leaf, and *venets*, a crown), in allusion to the arrangement of its acicular leaves. Its wood looks well for the walls and ceilings of the peasants' rooms. The larch is highly valued also for its power of resisting the effects of moisture, besides which, when used as fuel, it is found to produce a high degree of heat (in which respect the birch comes next), though it does not produce a brilliant light. For the tile-kilns it is preferable to all other wood, but it is not used for charcoal, nor does it serve well for burning in the house, on account of the pungent and stupefying qualities of its smoke; nor in the furnaces used for the manufacture of rolled iron plates, for it soils the metal.

The elegant spruce fir, with its branches almost down to the root and trailing on the ground, is more abundant, and extends nearly as far north. The Siberians look upon this tree as very important for commercial purposes. The wood is white, light, and very elastic. It is the favourite tree for masts, and is considered the best substitute for ash for oars, and it makes the best "knees" for shipbuilding. Snow-shoes also are generally made of this wood. The quality is good down into the roots. It is, however, subject to very hard knots, which are said to blunt the edge of any axe not made of Siberian steel. The Siberian spruce is less abundant, and differs from the common spruce in having a smooth bark of an ash-grey colour. The leaves are also of a much darker and bluer green. The wood is soft and liable to crack and decay, and is consequently of little commercial value; but, being easy to split, it is largely used for roofing and for fuel. The cost of firewood in Siberia per *sajen*, or seven-feet cube, is 3*s*., as compared with 12*s*. in Petersburg, and from 20*s*. to 30*s*. at Moscow.

usually weighs only three or four lbs., but occasionally reaches 18. The salmon is most numerous in the upper course of the river at Minusinsk, where it is caught in great numbers.

The birds of the Yeneseisk province have received much attention from Mr. Seebohm. He brought home, in 1877, about 500 eggs, and more than 1,000 skins, but he thinks that he would have had a still larger bag had he made Yeneseisk his head-quarters instead of the Kureika. He speaks of a perfect Babel of birds when the ice was breaking up at the beginning of June. Gulls, geese, and swans were flying about in all directions, also flocks of redpoles and shore-larks, bramblings and wagtails; and in the course of the summer were seen the sea-eagle, the rough-legged buzzard, the

At Krasnoiarsk a log of building timber, 80 feet long, costs from 20*d.* to 3*s.*, whilst bricks cost from 16*s.* to 20*s.* per 1,000. The Scotch fir, with the upper trunk and branches almost of a cinnamon yellow, is in many places very abundant.

The Siberian is proudest, however, of his cedar—a tree very similar in appearance to the Scotch fir, but more regular in its growth—clothed with branches nearer to the ground, and with an almost uniform grey trunk For furniture and indoor wood it is considered to be the best timber in the country, and is said never to rot or shrink, warp or crack. It is soft and easy to work, but has a fine grain, and is almost free from knots. The Ostjaks use it for building their large boats. They take a trunk two or three feet in diameter, split it, and of each half make a wide, thin board. Having no proper saws, they are obliged to cut the wood away with an axe, and thus the greater part of the tree is wasted. The Russian peasant is still more prodigal with his timber, for when I was going through the forest east of the Yenesei, a felled cedar-tree was pointed out, and the remark made that it was quite usual that a man who wanted nuts should cut down a fine tree for the sole purpose of replenishing his bag with the nut-filled cones.

The birch is common up to the 70th parallel, and still further north, on the tundra, in suitable localities, the creeping birch and two or three sorts of willow may be met with. The alder is abundant, and the juniper. The poplar is found as far north as Turukhansk. The Ostjaks hollow their canoes from the trunks of this tree.

sparrow-hawk, and various kinds of owls. In addition to our species of cuckoo, the Himalayan cuckoo made its way to these regions, though it had a different note to that of our English bird—a guttural and hollow-sounding *hoo*, which could be heard at a great distance. Ravens and carrion-crows were plentiful, and jackdaws, magpies, and starlings were seen at Yeneseisk, though the jackdaw and starling did not go much further north, which remark applies also to the bullfinch. The nut-cracker was found as far north as the Kureika, where it showed a desire to be sociable, and often perched on the rigging of the *Thames*. Besides these, Mr. Seebohm, among many other birds, mentions the thrush, the black, hazel, and willow grouse, the capercailzie, bittern, crane, lapwing, and golden plover. Towards the end of summer is to be seen, he says, a curious sight on the tundras—flocks of geese in full moult and unable to fly.

The Russian population of the province is settled for the more part in towns and villages by the side of the river, and along the great high road crossing it. The natives wander over the remainder. Russian villages are seen from 10 to 15 miles apart on the rivers' banks, at which travellers proceeding north may find oarsmen in summer and horses in winter,—horses, that is, as far as Turukhansk, beyond which first dogs and then reindeer are employed.

Most of the corn that is raised in the province grows about Minusinsk, where it may be bought at a fabulously low price, and whence it is brought down the river in barges and flat-bottomed boats.* Rye is not cultivated

* In 1876 the number of steamers on the Yenesei was four, all of which had paddle-wheels, and were used for tugging barges. The steamers took

further north than Antsiferova, 40 miles below Yeneseisk, and oats not beyond Zotina, on the 60th parallel. Potatoes are cultivated up to Turukhansk, but they are small. Agriculture, in fact, practically ceases a little beyond Yeneseisk. The Russians alone give any attention to it, as the natives are too busy fishing during their short summers to till the land. Cattle are raised to some small extent in the valley of the Yenesei, though the people do not appear to understand how to make the most of them. Cows are found as far as Dudinsk; but though in some of the villages they may have 40 or 50, it is almost impossible to get a glass of milk, the calves being allowed to take it all. An Anglo-Russian lady informs me that, were these cows treated like English ones, even for a few days, they would lose their milk; therefore a Russian cow is only partially milked, the rest being left for her calf. A scientific gentleman told my friend that it is the peculiarity of all cows only lately redeemed from a wild state to lose their milk when deprived of their calves. The making of butter is only half known on the Yenesei, and of cheese not at all. Sheep are found as far as Vorogova, and goats up to Yeneseisk.

Of the towns and villages on the Yenesei, Yeneseisk

no cargo on board, and some of the barges were arranged like floating shops. These last leave Yeneseisk at the end of May, and return from the lower part of the river at the end of September, during which period the two largest steamers, with engines of 60 or 70-horse power, make two voyages, the smaller only one. Some of the barges are of 250 tons burthen. Besides these steamers, there were two sailing-boats of 50 tons burthen each, and a number of others from 6 to 20 tons. It should also be added that there are large pentagonal boats or barges, constructed with huge timbers in the corn-growing districts on the upper part of the river, whence they are towed down each by 15 or 20 men, and then, arrived at their destination, are broken up for building or firewood. Such was the fleet of the Yenesei at the time of the visit of M. Théel.

is the oldest, having been founded in 1618; and the most curious is that of Silovanoff, near Turukhansk. It is inhabited by exiled *Scoptsi*, a fanatical sect whose principal doctrine is based on Matt. xix. 12, who mutilate themselves, and endeavour to persuade others to follow their example. When these people are caught so acting, they are banished.*

It has already been intimated that the aborigines wander over the uninhabited parts of the province. In the south, about Minusinsk, are Tatars, most of whom have embraced the Christianity of the Russian Church. In the north, to the west of the river, are the

* Mr. Seebohm tells me that, as regards material comforts, this village is far in advance of the ordinary Russian villages. He found the land well cultivated and railed off, the cattle kept out by gates, and there was a hospital for the sick. The houses were ventilated, the joining work was good, and there were books. All intoxicants were forbidden, and likewise tobacco and tea and coffee. Morally, in fact, it was a model village and without crime. The inhabitants, however, of whom there were more men than women, had a remarkable appearance. They were all sallow; the men were beardless, with squeaky voices; and no inhabitant was less than forty years of age. A "baby's music" had never been heard among them. They keep all the festivals of the Russian Church, but have no priest. They say that every man is a priest, and that he can perform priestly acts only for himself. They provided Mr. Seebohm, as a guest, with both tea and butter, but the Scoptsi themselves eat no animal food but fish, use no butter and drink no milk. At least this was so originally; but here breaks forth a fact that should be respectfully dedicated to all who suppose it within the bounds of possibility to bring every one, or to keep every one, to the same way of thinking. These people number less than a score, have no one in the village not of their own persuasion, and yet they have split into two sects, the difference being that one drinks milk and the other does not. Originally some 700 or 800 were sent from the government of Perm; but many on the Yenesei were dying, and they petitioned to be removed elsewhere, and are now to be found with other Scoptsi in large numbers in the province of Yakutsk. As to the relative salubrity of these and other Siberian provinces, the only clue that I have is that whereas in 1879 the death-rate in the government of Perm, whence these people came, was 5·07 per cent., it was 4·13 in the province of Tobolsk, 3·89 in that of Irkutsk, and 3·51 in the province of Yeneseisk.

Samoyedes and Ostjaks. West of the river, at the extreme north, are the Yuraks, and below them the Tunguses, which latter wander over a far larger area than any other tribe in Siberia.* Those in the Yene-

OSTJAK WOMEN OF THE YENESEISK PROVINCE.

seisk province give themselves to the care of reindeer

* Dr. Latham observes that, if we take the principal populations that are common to the Russian and Chinese Empires, we find them to be the Turkish, Mongolian, and Tungusian races; the Turk on the west, the Mongol in the middle, and the Tunguse on the east. The Tunguse race begins, he says, north of Peking, and stretches through Manchuria across

and to the chase. M. Théel speaks of them as the most intelligent of the natives on the Yenesei, and says that their rich women, probably wives of chiefs, often wear furs of beaver, sable, and black fox to the value of many hundreds of pounds sterling. He mentions also, as some proof of their intellectual taste, that there was presented to him a hexagonal spindle of ivory, upon which the days, the weeks, and the months were indicated by different signs. He speaks also of a game they had resembling chess, of which all the pieces were of ivory.

Among the principal animals, objects of their chase, are the sable, the common fox, the white fox, the elk, the reindeer, the wolf, the bear, the ermine, and the squirrel. At the beginning of October, and sometimes also of January, they start on snow-shoes. Alone, or in company, the hunter goes into the virgin forest, some hundreds of versts from any habitation, and is followed by a little sledge drawn by dogs. If he finds the track of a sable, he follows, and, on lighting upon the animal, he has not much difficulty in killing it. But the sable often takes refuge in a hole, and then there is nothing to be done but to await his pleasure in coming out; and as this may be by night as

the district of the Amur, and north-east and west to the sea of Okhotsk and to the Yenesei. Of the Tunguse family the Manchu is the most civilized, whilst in Siberia we have them in their extreme character of rude nomads, unlettered, and still pagan, or but imperfectly Christianized. The Tungusian approaches the Mongolian, the Ostjak, or the Eskimo, according as his residence lies north or south; within the limit of the growth of trees or beyond it, on the champaign, the steppe, or the tundra. On the tundra the horse ceases to be his domestic animal, and the reindeer or the dog replaces it. Hence we hear of three divisions of the Tunguse family called by different names, according as they possess horses, reindeer, or dogs.

well as by day, his retreat is covered with fine threads attached to bells, which give the alarm. The hunter may thus have to wait two or three days; but, if he happen to kill the much-coveted animal, his trouble is

YUKAK HUNTSMAN.

well rewarded; for a good sable skin fetches from 50*s.* to £10. In skinning, the coat ought not to be stretched; but, on the contrary, contracted as much as possible, in order to render the hairs more bushy,

which enhances the value. Hence the skins one meets with in commerce are all short and wide.

The common fox is taken with snares and traps. The black fox is very rare in these parts, and its skin is valued up to £100. The white fox is taken on the tundra by means of traps placed on the top of little hills. This animal generally retires south towards the middle of September; and as it is known that the fox, rather than jump over an obstacle, however low, goes round it, the hunters, profiting by this knowledge, set up barriers of branches, leaving openings where they plant their snares, and catch their prey. The hunting of the elk is carried on by men on snow-shoes; and such numbers of this animal are killed that in some years one may buy at Yeneseisk as many as 10,000 skins. Reindeer are taken in numbers equally large, sometimes in traps, and sometimes by driving whole herds into an enclosure, from which they cannot get out.*

One of their modes of capturing the bear in the Yeneseisk province is by fixing a wooden platform to the trunk of a tree, and at such a height from the ground that the bear is forced to stand on his hind-legs at full length to reach the middle. On this platform are numerous barbed iron spikes, and at the higher part a joint of meat. The bear arrives, stands up, and puts forward one paw to seize the bait; but, bringing it down on the spikes, finds it fixed. The furious animal puts down the second to release the

* The horns of these animals are very fine. I was presented with a pair in Archangel, measuring nearly four feet from the skull to the extremities, which are a yard apart. The brow antlers are 13 inches long, and the bes-antlers, or those next above, 16 and 18 inches respectively, whilst the total measurement of antlers and branches is upwards of 14 feet.

first, which also is caught, and he thus becomes an easy prey to the huntsman.

Thus the natives spend their days—fishing in summer and hunting in winter. They have no towns, no villages, no houses, but live in tents of skins or of bark, according to the season; and they have little idea of civilized life, or the mineral wealth with which their country abounds. Iron ore is found in the valley of the Yenesei, and from the province, in 1877, 2,700 tons were cast; also from the mine of graphite, on the Kureika, Captain Wiggins ballasted one of his vessels. The greatest mineral product of the province, however, is gold, of which I shall speak in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VISIT TO A GOLD-MINE.

Gold in Siberia.—Where found.—Gold-hunting.—A prospecting party.—Thawing the ground.—Subterranean passages.—Hardships.—Mining calculations.—Building of barracks.—Preparations for our visit.—Costumes.—Road through the "forest primeval."—Luxuriant vegetation.—Crossing mountains.—Arrival at mine.—Labour of miners.—Gold-washing machine.—Government inspection.—Wages.—Hours of labour.—Miners' food.—Pay-day.—Drink and its follies.—Miners' fortunes.—Mines of Eastern Siberia.—Return to Krasnoiarsk.

NOT many Englishmen, probably, would think of going to Siberia to seek for *El-dorado*, the fabled land of gems and gold. Many tons of precious metals, however, are found there yearly; and there are firms, consisting of only two or three partners, that net an annual income of more than half-a-million sterling. The Russian empire furnishes an eighth part of the gold found yearly throughout the world, and three-fourths of this quantity come from Siberia. It was at the beginning of the century that gold-washing was commenced in the Urals, and a period of great prosperity followed from 1825 to about 1850. Since that time the number of mines has increased, but the profits are less, because, whilst the value of gold has diminished, the price of labour has risen. The sources and affluents of the great Siberian rivers are rich in gold. The districts on the west of Lake Baikal that are most worked are those of Yeneseisk, Irkutsk,

Kansk, Nijni-Udinsk, and the sources of the Lena, which last are the richest.*

Accordingly, when we arrived at Krasnoiarsk, the large town of the Yeneseisk gold-mining district, and made acquaintance with some of the gold-seekers' families, it appeared a good opportunity to visit one of the mines, since they were called "near." It was rather alarming, however, to discover what were the Siberians' notions of the word *near*, for in that huge country 100 miles or more go for nothing—in fact, are a mere trifle, and not too long to be travelled for the sake of a ball or a festive gathering. The gold-seekers' daughters even sometimes go out to their fathers' mines within this distance, and, when they do so, stride their horses in top-boots and knickerbockers to save their dresses being torn in the primeval forest, or, as it is called, the *taiga*. When, therefore, I found that a pair of high boots would be necessary, and that it would involve a long journey on horseback, I rather hesitated. We had, however, been introduced to the Director of the Krasnoiarsk Hospital, Dr. Peacock; and when it appeared that not only he, but Mrs. Peacock also, would join the party, my courage rose, and I determined to go.

But, before we start, let me try to give the reader some idea as to the localities in which the gold is

* East of Lake Baikal are many mines on various rivers, such as the Nertcha, the Ingoda, and the Onon. Another famous river is the Olekma whilst the Amur produces so much of the precious metal that the yield of some of its valleys is fabulous. I heard, near Albazin, concerning the Upper Amur Gold-mining Company, that for the past ten years they have washed 150 poods of gold annually, which, reckoned at £2,000 a pood—its price during the year of my visit—gives a product of £3,000,000. Also of the Vitim, during the summer of 1878, from 300 to 400 poods, I was told had been extracted, which represent from £600,000 to £800,000 sterling.

found, and how it is discovered. In the mountainous districts of the forest countless brooks unite into rivulets, which, in accordance with the character of the landscape, have a strong fall, becoming very rapid in the spring, and still more so in the summer, after the melting of the snow. The waters uproot trees, undermine rocks, and sweep along earth, gold, and other metals with resistless fury, till the lowlands are reached, where the stream, having no longer the same force, allows the heavy gold to sink to the bottom, to be covered, perhaps, next season with more gold, or, perhaps, by earth and rubbish. It will be easy to understand, then, how a layer of sand containing gold may be thus formed, and subsequently covered over with beds of earth and stone.

The professional *tayoshnik*, or gold-hunter, has to discover these auriferous layers; but this he cannot do alone.* There must be a prospecting party made up, which may consist, say, of an overseer, a leader, 8 workmen, 10 horses, 18 saddle-bags, provisions, and tools, the whole of which may be estimated to cost £500, which amount has to be risked, for the party may go out into the taiga and find nothing, or what may prove worse than nothing.†

* Any one, indeed, may go into the uninhabited *taiga* to seek for gold (as the hunter may penetrate the same dismal region in search of game), provided, that is, he have a certificate from the mining officers, which he may get by giving proofs of good citizenship from the local authorities among whom he resides. He is then at liberty, when he has found gold, to hire the land from the Government for the purposes of mining.

† A party of this kind will go where, perhaps, the foot of man has never trodden. Fortunate is the *tayoshnik* if he have by his side a faithful native who can direct; otherwise he throws himself into a labyrinth of small valleys and hills, intersected in all directions by rushing mountain streams. He has no path to guide him save the course

The tayoshnik knows, however, that the Siberian gold deposits are almost always to be met with on the banks of streams, or in their beds. Again, gold is often hidden in crevices of the earth that have evidently once served as channels for running water. Moreover, he knows that those rivers that wash up gold are always such as have their sources in ravines, the rocks of which are very much weather-beaten. Gold is rarely found at precipitous spots, and is most abundant where the water ages ago had a calmer current, and consequently no longer possessed the necessary strength to carry the heavy metal along.*

The hunter must, however, dig some depth beneath the surface, the thickness of the beds of earth covering the gold varying from 2 to 20 feet, though it increases sometimes to 150 feet. At some spots three or four gold deposits, or *plasts*, as they are called, lie one over the other, separated by thick strata of earth and rocks, in which case the lowest of the plasts is generally the richest.†

of the rivers, often no compass save the sun, and in this manner he travels —mounted, perhaps, on a small Siberian pony, or, in the far north, on the back of a reindeer. In situations where it is impossible for him to make use of small sledges drawn by reindeer on the frozen rivers, he has to run on snow-shoes, everywhere encountering hardship and dangers, with certain death in store for him should he lose his way.

* Large rivers hardly ever carry gold with them, and when in exceptional cases they do, the treasure cannot be recovered, since to turn the water from its channel would be too great an expense. The shape of the gold grains gives some idea of its previous history and travels. Are the particles flat and thin? Then they have been dragged over sand and rocks. Are they round like grains? Then they have been in some whirlpool, participants in a mad circling dance. Or, once more, are they fine dust particles, with here and there a larger piece, or with various minerals attached—particularly quartz, their original home? Then in this last shape the gold has probably had a comfortable and quiet journey.

† The *plasts* vary from 3 inches to 15 feet, and their composition varies

With knowledge of this kind, therefore, the gold-hunter proceeds till he arrives at a valley along which he judges some ancient river ages ago may have rolled down its golden sands. He then seeks in the bed of the rivulet for pyrites, iron, slate-clay, or quartz with a thick coat of crystals; and at length he forms a judgment as to whether or not he is likely by digging to find a gold deposit. If his verdict be favourable, then all hands are set to work to cut down trees and build a rude log hut, in which the party may have to live for months. The next business is to dig a number of holes or trenches at a distance from each other, to get down to the auriferous layers—that is, if there are any; for if there be none, their labour of course is lost, and they have to try elsewhere. But if there be auriferous layers, it is no easy matter to get to them, for gold-hunting is usually followed in the winter, often with the thermometer many degrees below zero, and when the ground is so hard as not to be pierced even by a pickaxe; they have, therefore, to make huge bonfires, whereby the earth is softened, so as to allow trenches of considerable depth to be dug. This manœuvre has to be repeated until the longed-for gold is found, or unyielding stone presents an impenetrable obstacle.*

These trenches or holes are made under the super-

considerably. Blue clay, coarse sand, quartz, clay-slate, limestone, granite, and syenite occur frequently, as well as iron in the most various combinations; and, more rarely, ferruginous red clay. This last is very tough, and in the rainy season causes the workmen no little difficulty. In return, however, it contains a good deal of gold. In the district of the Olekma the gold deposit rests on a bed of firm rock.

* In many localities it is in the cold season only that the trenches can be dug with advantage. In summer they would be quickly flooded. Even in the winter the water must be fought against, and there are some places where the earth is dug out from under frozen rivers.

intendence of the overseer. Samples of the earth are constantly tried, and so guidance is obtained as to the direction in which other work should be begun, and some idea formed as to the depth and breadth of the beds of gold. Often, however, the metal lies so far beneath the surface that it would scarcely be possible to dig out all the trenches begun. In such cases the wider ones are sunk into wells or shafts, and subterranean passages are made.*

Thus the work of testing a locality may take some little time; meanwhile the workmen and overseer live in their wretched hut, which often is not well roofed, and heated only by a portable stove. The wind whistles through the cracks of the moss-calked walls, an insupportable heat reigns in the vicinity of the stove, while, on the opposite walls, icicles gleam like brilliants, and melting snow falls from above. The air is rendered poisonous by the exhalations of the inmates and the vapour ascending from damp clothing hung near the fire to dry. In fact, as the workmen say, the atmosphere is thick enough "to hang up an axe in." However, in the wilderness, even such a shelter is a longed-for refuge when a fierce snowstorm is raging and the thermometer has sunk to far below zero.

But the climate is not the only hardship the gold-hunter has to encounter. His provisions consist of black rusks, dried meat, tea, and a little brandy; and

* These are the beginning of the so-called gold-*mines*. The subterranean work, which is carried on principally during the winter months, does not differ much from the ordinary work of the miner. Poisonous vapours do not usually occur, but, when cutting through clay-slate, the presence of sulphate of cobalt has sometimes an injurious effect. The passages are nine feet wide and high, and two labourers generally work from two to three tons of sand per day. The sand thus accumulated during the winter is thrown up into heaps and washed in the summer.

often he does not possess as much as could be wished even of this meagre fare, for he is obliged to carry with it all requisite tools and weapons on his beasts of burden, and communication with civilized centres or depôts is usually difficult, and in spring sometimes impossible. My interpreter told me he had an uncle, who was a *tayoshnik*, who made an income of about £1,000 a year, but had sometimes, for want of better food, to eat bear's flesh.

But supposing the overseer to have discovered a promising spot, and to have tested the earth from several holes, he can then strike an average as to the amount of gold that may be got from every hundred poods—that is, every 32 cwt., or say every ton and a half—of sand. If the amount be five *zolotniks*,—say, ¾ oz., this is thought rich; if less than ⅛ oz. it is very poor; sometimes, however, ½ lb. of gold even is found to 100 poods of sand. The overseer has next to calculate whether it will pay to work the mine.*

If, when all things are calculated, the land promises to pay, he sticks up two posts, one on each end of the area he has chosen, despatches a courier to his employer, and the place is registered at once by the commissary of police or other competent authority from the local Direction of Mines. The area is then thoroughly surveyed by a Government surveyor, who makes a map of the spot, and, when all is secured to

* He must reckon the quantity of earth and rubbish to be removed before he gets to the gold sand, also the number of labourers necessary to be brought to the place, and food to keep them; and, further, he must consider what will be the summer level of the stream on which his claim lies, because without the proper supply of water the machinery cannot be set in motion, and to put up an artificial water conduit would be too expensive.

the finder, the proprietor can at once borrow money on the security of his mine, paying at the rate of from 20 to 30 per cent., according as money is scarce or plentiful. Many capitalists, content with this interest, employ all their money in this way.*

The next thing is to build the necessary houses and barracks for the future manager of the mine and his workmen, the number of which may vary from 10 to 2,000. Provisions and fuel provided, then the digging begins about the middle of February, and the washing about the 1st of May, the operations being over on the 10th of September, or, if the weather be unusually fine, on the 1st of November. When a mine has been registered, it *must* be worked to some extent, or it is forfeited to the Crown. The owner, however, may sell it if he pleases, but it must not remain idle.

It was to a mine that had been opened the same year that we were to start from Krasnoiarsk. It was called the Archangel Gabriel mine, and was situated on the river Slisneva, at a spot nearly 30 miles from the Yenesei. Our worthy doctor arrayed himself for the occasion in the costume of a Tyrolese hunter, with a double gun over his shoulders, a revolver and bowie-knife in his belt, and a huntsman's horn; for he hoped, he said, that we might chance to meet with a bear—a hope that I cannot say was shared by all the party. I know at least of one who hoped we should *not* meet with a bear. However, it was by no means unlikely,

* An area consists of a piece of land about 3½ miles long, the breadth being determined by the distance between the two mountains in which the gold-seam lies. This is generally from 500 to 1,000 feet. No one can occupy more than three consecutive miles; but a wife, a friend, or partner, having a certificate, may take the adjoining three miles, and then the three miles below may be taken, and so on to any extent.

and I accordingly armed Mr. Interpreter with our revolver. Madame Peacock wore a black velvet hat, a magenta chemisette, a brown tweed tunic, black knickerbockers, and top boots; and thus, with a few provisions, we started in the afternoon to cross the Yenesei to the village of Basaïka. The water was more than 20 feet higher than it had risen for 30 years, the ferry had been washed away, and the force of the stream carried down our boat a good mile ere we reached the opposite bank; and then, after wading through a great deal of mud and water, in doing which we learned to appreciate high boots, we reached the village, and took refreshment before mounting our steeds. We then advanced in single file from the village through the cultivated bottom-land, and afterwards through much grass, that was very like penetrating a forest of herbs, to which our horses took kindly, for they had scarcely to stoop their heads to nibble their fodder. Although the summer was young, there were to be seen the acacia in blossom, currants, and raspberries; and among flowers, the bitter vetch, the spiræa, anemones, Flora's bell, high pæonies, aconite, or wolf's bane, and large dragon-mouths; also abundance of ferns, among them one strongly resembling the *Osmunda regalis*, and the magnificent *Struthiopteris germanica*, which attains to gigantic growth in Siberia; and even the trunks of the trees and the granite rocks were covered with a rich variety of lichens and verdant mosses.

Thus far, therefore, everything was going well. The evening was delightful, and all were in excellent spirits. Soon, however, our guide turned into the forest, and we had before us the first of two mountains over whose

backs we were to climb, thinking to reach our destination by nightfall. At this point we began to get some idea of what is meant by "the forest primeval," for sometimes the way was all but impassable by reason of masses of shattered-down dry wood; now our horses stepped over fallen trees, and now waded knee-deep up the beds of rivulets; in some places we met with snow-white skeletons of dead trees with branching arms; in others the way, indicated by notches on the trees, had been cut with an axe.

As we mounted higher and higher, we had before us a fine, bold, rocky mountain, lit up with the sinking sun. My companions called to me to look back, and we had a splendid view of the noble Yenesei at sunset, of its verdant bottom-lands on either side, its impetuous stream, and magnificent forests.

We then prepared for our first descent. But it became dusk, and the overshadowing trees made our difficulty the greater. My horse, however, seemed to know so well what he was about, that I was minded to keep my seat and hope for the best. But when all my companions, including Madame and the guide, had dismounted, and advised me to do the same if I valued my neck, I followed suit till the valley was reached. We then remounted for a short distance, by which time it was quite dark, and for a short space some of the party were lost to the others. All came right, however, towards midnight, when we saw afar off the glimmering of a candle. This we hailed with a lusty blast of the doctor's horn, thinking to awake the inhabitants. Our coming had not been expected, but letters from the owners of the mine secured us attention, and such hospitality as the place afforded. "Let

us have the samovar," said the doctor; "and bring a good large one, please, for we shall empty it."

And he was true to his word; for although they brought a twenty-glass samovar, it went out empty. Russians, however, be it remembered, think nothing of drinking from eight to a dozen glasses of tea, and we were in need of refreshment!

Then came the question of sleep. They had but one room to offer us. Madame, therefore, lay on what might be called by courtesy a sofa. The bedstead was politely given to me, and the doctor and interpreter lay on the floor. Thus we managed to rest till about five in the morning, when we were called. Our toilets had to be speedily arranged, and our faces washed with a handful or two of water outside the door, for there was no sort of washing apparatus to be seen. After some tea and rusks, we started to witness the working of the gold-mine.

I had seen the Swedish iron-mines of Dannemora, and had gone down a copper-mine in the Urals; but the gold-mine was something new. There was no underground work going on, and no digging of holes and sending up the earth to be washed; but the whole surface had been laid bare. Hence the work resembled that of English navvies making a cutting. There were a number of small carts drawn by Siberian horses, and men with pickaxes and shovels filling them. When full, the carts were drawn up an incline to a platform, and emptied into one end of a large iron cylinder, resembling a coffee-roaster, with holes all round it. This was made to rotate by water-power, and the large stones and pebbles were, by the formation and turning of the cylinder, tumbled out at the end. Here

they were duly watched, so that no nuggets should b overlooked. At the same time several streams of wate were poured into the cylinder, and the earth and sma pebbles, passing through the holes, fell into a lon wooden apron, inclined at an angle of 35°, with move able boxes or "pockets."

In order that we might see how the gold was washed the manager caused some of these pockets to be emptie on to an inclined plane of clean wood, raised at eithe side, and over which ran equably and slowly a strea of clear water. One of the pockets (called *dundofk* was then emptied on the higher part of the plane, an the water soon washed away the mud, the man wh performed the washing having a wooden scraper, lik that of a scavenger, with which he pushed back th descending grains of gold. This was repeated ti six poods, or say 200 lbs., of washed earth had bee placed on the board. After the mud and sand ha been allowed to roll away, a brush was used instead o the scraper, and there remained behind perhaps a sma teaspoonful of gold-dust, or as much as was roughl valued at from 40*s.* to 50*s.* The gold was then place in a miniature frying-pan, and held over a small fire t dry, after which it was put into what resembled "poor-box." This was done in the presence of Government official, of whom there is always one a every mine, and who is usually a Cossack officer.*

* It is his duty to supervise the washing of the gold, which is placed in a coffer, locked by the proprietor, and sealed by the Government agent, the quantity of gold washed at each operation being entered in a register. If they find a quarter of an ounce of gold to a ton and a half of sand, then 200 men can wash from four to five pounds of gold a day. I heard, however, of a mine to the south of Yeneseisk, where they usually found from 15 to 20 lbs., and sometimes even up to 36 lbs. a day. Gold thus found is not always pure, but is frequently mixed with magnetic iron, which is

The gold thus gained is eventually poured into bags of coarse linen, which, after having been stamped with the brand of the mine, are sewn in leather sacks* and taken to Irkutsk or Barnaul, where it is assayed; and afterwards there is deducted the tax of from 5 to 10 per cent., according to the quantity. Gold assignats are given in exchange, payable in six months, or they may be cashed at the Government bank at a discount of 7 per cent. per annum. Thus all the gold found in the country is claimed by the Government, and it is unlawful for any person to have gold-dust in his possession unknown to the authorities.

After we had seen the manner of washing the gold we walked into the barracks, the hospital, stables, and the houses for the 200 or 300 workmen. I have spoken of the hardships that are endured by a prospecting party. Yet, despite all their privations and dangers, there is never a lack of persons who volunteer their services to wealthy projectors, for they receive large wages. The overseer who discovers the mine generally stipulates that he shall receive from 1 to 5 per cent. on the yield; and the percentage given to some of the others on a lucky find is very liberal. The ordinary labourers, too, such as we saw, are well paid.

drawn off by a magnet. Nor is the metal all of the same colour. In some places it is found very dark, and often still covered by a crust of oxide of iron; in other places it is of a very light colour, and contains silver.

* Each bag contains about 50 lbs. of gold. Two of these, further protected by a covering of thick felt, constitute the load for one horse. To the two bags are fastened a long cord and a piece of dry wood, so that, in the event of the horses' burdens being washed away while crossing a swollen river, the floating wood would indicate the whereabouts of the sunken treasure. In the middle of June, or at the end of the season, the departure of loads of gold from the mine is accompanied with pistol-firing and the booming of cannon, and cheers and blessings bid the caravan *bon voyage*.

Among them, of course, is a great variety of races and people. There meet at the mines the nobleman and the Siberian peasant; the former officer of the army and the pardoned convict; the Pole, the German, the Tatar, and numberless others, who work in common, now freezing in the icy blasts of winter, and now scorching in the heat of the summer sun. They work intensely hard (sometimes from 3 a.m. to 7 p.m.), and observe no Sundays or saints' days, excepting that of the patron saint of the mine. But in most cases they have wholesome food, warm quarters, and attention in sickness.

Some of them, however, run away. It happens occasionally that a man may have secreted gold, with which he gets off as early as possible; and some, not reckoning aright the difficulties of travelling so far alone, have been found starved, the useless gold clutched in the grasp of lifeless fingers. We found some attention paid to what might be called the fanaticism of the Mohammedan workmen; the Tatars being placed alone, and convenience being afforded them to cook their food in their own way. A separate barrack, too, was assigned to married men with their wives. Over an outdoor fire hung a large caldron, big enough to boil a donkey—the largest I had ever seen. This, I presumed, was for cooking the meat; and in the bake-house we saw abundance of rye bread, of which some of the men eat 7 lbs. in a day. Their beverages are tea and quass. It is forbidden by law to sell spirituous liquors at the mines. Only the managers have the right to keep them in their possession, though this sensible regulation is often evaded by contrabandists.

When the 10th of September arrives, and the workmen receive their pay, they break forth into the wildest

excesses. Before leaving the mine, each labourer gets a ticket, setting forth what he is to receive, which may vary from £20 to £50. This ticket he has to present some miles away at his employer's office, and there, awaiting him outside, are merchants and dealers, who manage soon to empty his pockets. He too frequently begins by drinking; and then the man who has toiled harder than a slave for months is often at a loss to know upon what objects and follies to lavish his money.

Captain Wiggins says that he never witnessed among the Siberian miners such scenes of depravity and disorder as may be witnessed among the Australian and Californian miners, or even, at times, in the low streets of English seaport towns. Another Englishman, however, has told me a different story, to the effect that one miner, for instance, will take a common woman and clothe her in satin and velvet, and then, a week after, when money is gone, will tear the clothes from her back to raise capital for drink. Another, of a vain turn of mind, buys bottles of champagne, and sticks them up in a row to throw stones at; a third will buy a piece of printed cotton, or other material, lay it down in the dirty road, and, to indulge his aristocratic tread, will walk on it; whilst a fourth, despising to be drawn by horses, will yoke to his *telega* his fellow-fools who have spent their money, and so be drawn by human beings. The end of this, of course, is that their money is speedily gone; and now comes the opportunity of the masters for the following year, since they know that they shall want the men again, and labour is scarce. Employers, therefore, advance them money, and the poor sots start off to walk, perhaps, 500 miles to their homes or friends, where, having

arrived, they must needs return in a few months to begin the labours of another season.

The managers of mines, some of whom make £1,000 a year, congregate in the winter in the towns, where much drinking and card-playing goes on. If capitalists are fortunate, they can make and keep large fortunes. Two gold-seekers in Krasnoiarsk are reputed to have found, in about 10 years, 1,000 poods of gold, of the value, say, of £2,000,000 sterling. We dined at the house of one of these men.*

But to return to the Archangel Gabriel mine. After we had looked at the buildings, and seen what else there was of interest, we returned to a breakfast of beefsteaks, left some books for the workmen, and then, mounting our steeds, returned towards Krasnoiarsk; and, seeing that four persons similarly attired might not meet again for awhile, I proposed that, on reaching the town, we should be photographed in a group. This was done; and so ended one of the pleasantest *détours* of our journey.

* There are, or were, some rich gold-mine proprietors at Kiakhta. One firm there, consisting of three partners, washed in one year enough gold to give a net profit of £600,000; they expected the year after to make £1,000,000; and the Government surveyor calculated that at that rate the mine would last 50 years. Thus many fortunes are realized in Siberia; but hardly a month passes without chronicling some one's ruin, which may often be attributed to the fast life and gaming propensities of the miners. Hence, although between the years 1833 and 1870 about 30,000 poods of gold were sent out of Eastern Siberia alone, to the value of £50,000,000, the finding of which gave employment in some years to upwards of 30,000 workmen, yet it will be seen from the foregoing that this great wealth has not proved an unmixed blessing, for the discovery of a gold-mine never brings to it a population permanently thriving and industrious.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM KRASNOIARSK TO ALEXANDREFFSKY.

Situation of Krasnoiarsk.—Our hotel.—Dr. Peacock.—Visit to prison, hospital, and madhouse.—Cathedral.—Drive in "Rotten Row."—Shoeing horses.—Bible affairs at Krasnoiarsk.—Consignment to Governor for provinces of Yeneseisk and Yakutsk.—Departure from Krasnoiarsk.—Change of scenery.—Kansk *Okrug*.—Our arrival anticipated.—Visit to Ispravnik.—Statistics of crime.—The Proto-pope of Kansk.—Parochial information.—Demand for Scriptures.—A travelling companion.—Further posting help.—Butterflies and mosquitoes.—Nijni Udinsk.—Telma factory.—A *détour*.—Alexandreffsky.

SIBERIA, immense as it is, has only 17 towns with a population of more than 5,000 inhabitants, and of these large towns Krasnoiarsk, with a population of 13,000, is a fair specimen. It derives its name from the Russian words *krasnoi*, red, and *yar*, a cliff, in allusion to the red-coloured marl of the banks on which the town is situated; its houses being built on the tongue of land at the confluence of the Yenesei and the Kacha. On the south the plain stretches away for nine versts, and on the south-west a range of blue hills is descried, which betray their rocky character by sharp and picturesque outlines. The opposite bank, too, of the Yenesei has, amidst forest scenery, some fine rocks, one of which, of curious formation, called the Tokmak, rises to the dignity of a mount. The Siberians, therefore, are justified, to a

considerable degree, in claiming for Krasnoiarsk that it is picturesquely situated. It was certainly the prettiest spot we had thus far seen; and since we made there some pleasant acquaintances, and received much kindness from the people, it naturally lingers in the memory as one of the bright spots of our journey.*

Having arrived early on the morning of the 24th June, we drove to what is called an hotel, kept by one "Shlyaktin," where we engaged the best room in the house for two shillings a day, with two bedsteads, for which, as usual in Russia, we provided our own pillows and linen. Other things were proportionately cheap: turkeys 3*s.* a pair; a whole calf, nine months old, from 3*s.* to 4*s.*; geese from 1*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a couple; but pheasants, brought hundreds of miles from Tashkend, cost 6*s.* a brace.

We had not entered many minutes before several beggars came to the window to solicit alms, which seemed to be their method of honouring all newcomers; and if they received anything they crossed themselves, and no doubt blessed us.†

Krasnoiarsk boasts of a Lutheran chapel, though it

* Owing to the formation of the hills about the town, Krasnoiarsk is more than ordinarily favoured with abundance of wind, which in winter blows the snow off the ground and stops sledging. One night during our stay it rained, and the streets were in a condition next morning such as I have never seen before or since. To speak of "puddles" would be a mockery, and "ponds" is barely the word to use; whilst to cross the street was to run imminent risk of losing one's boots. Fortunately, however, there were droshkies at hand, and in these we waded through water nearly up to the horses' knees.

† We saw beggars here and at Tomsk, but I do not recollect that they were numerous or particularly importunate. The Russians are, however, in this sense, very charitable. It is customary not only to give a few kopecks to such as these, but also to the old men posted at the entrances of the villages, who have charge of the gates placed across the roads to keep cattle from straying in or out.

is without a resident pastor. We made it our business to go there first, thinking to find a catechist, Mr. Adamson, for whom we had a letter. He was away, however, and was represented by an old German woman. Whether she recognized in us kindred spirits, I know not, but she cried as she shook our hands and bade us God-speed.

We then accompanied Dr. Peacock, who took us first to see the prison,* and afterwards the large hospital, through which pass annually about 2,500 patients. A part of it serves as a madhouse, in which were 48 inmates, 42 of whom were exiles, 28 being pronounced incurable. From inquiries I made, I did not gather that medical opinion went so far as to say that banishment drove people mad; but it seemed that many so afflicted were exiled as prisoners who ought rather to have been in lunatic asylums as idiots; such, for instance, was the case of one man who had been sent to Siberia for setting houses on fire, and who, on arriving, repeated his offence, saying that he did it "for fun." †

* It was one of the *perisylnie* character, having 46 wards, and a hospital with sixteen rooms. There were 26 murderers in the place, and the number of persons committing this crime yearly in the district seemed to me, from the round numbers they gave, to be very high. The sentences of murderers, they said, varied from five or six to 20 years' hard labour, after which time they were free as exiles. The general arrangements of the prison appeared to be fairly good. I thought it clean and well ordered; and we were struck, in the bake-house, with the enormous size of their loaves of bread, some of them weighing from 40 to 50 lbs.

† In the Tomsk hospital we had seen two persons mad from the effects of alcoholic drink; and I was sorry to hear it asserted afterwards, by a Russian medical man, that the proportion of those in Siberia who went mad from *delirium tremens* was greater than in England; and he further remarked of his countrymen, that though for a long time they indulge in no intoxicating liquor, yet when they once drink they do so furiously. A friend of mine had more than one man-servant who acted

The hospital building had been originally erected as a private residence by a rich gold-seeker.* How far, in its altered condition, the house suits the purpose of a hospital, I could not judge; for in Russia they have a habit, in summer, of turning the patients out under temporary sheds and tents whilst the buildings are being repaired for the winter; and this was the state of affairs at Krasnoiarsk during our inspection. But I am afraid the building is not all that could be desired. At Tomsk we had seen a summer tent-hospital for 20 men with typhus fever.

Krasnoiarsk has a cathedral, presided over by the Bishop of Yeneseisk, and four or five churches, one of which was built at a cost of £70,000 by a rich gold-seeker, by name, I think, Kusnitzoff, which, be it known to English readers, means "Smith." We made the acquaintance of two of his daughters during our voyage on the Obi. They had been spending the winter in Petersburg, and were then travelling a distance of 3,000 miles to spend the summer in Siberia. This was their usual practice. One of these ladies had travelled to England, had even crossed the Atlantic to America, and we were glad to renew our acquaintance at Krasnoiarsk. Theirs was one of the best of the private houses, on entering which a broad flight of steps led to the upper storey, where was a drawing-

in this manner. They did *not* drink for months, and then all of a sudden did so without ceasing, and would be mad drunk for a week or ten days. At last, exhausted, they slept for a day or two, and woke up abashed, promising to do so no more; but, alas! it was only till the next time.

* It is the same, I suspect, as that mentioned by Mr. Hill in his "Travels in Siberia," 30 years ago, the dimensions of which he gives as 131 feet long by 98 broad and 52 high. It is of two storeys, and in Mr. Hill's time was furnished after the most elegant mode of Petersburg. The articles brought from that capital alone cost its owner from £6,000 to £7,000.

room, or rather a ball-room, containing two grand pianos, the walls being hung with European oil-paintings, and where, among other curiosities, we were shown three nuggets of gold, each of which must have weighed several pounds, but serving no purpose but to be looked at, save that a natural indentation in one had been used on certain grand occasions as a cigar-boat. In front of the house was an enclosure, full of shrubs, dahlias, and flowers; but it was manifest that horticultural operations were carried on with difficulty. The Siberians do more with flowers in their rooms, thus adding much to their beauty.

We dined at this house, and afterwards were taken for a drive. The plain running south of the town is the "Rotten Row" of Krasnoiarsk; and here we saw a fair Amazon, of good position, and the mother, by-the-bye, of three children, with hair cut short behind, sitting astride her horse, in knickerbockers and high boots. It was the only instance we saw of this, however; and further east, on the Amur, I met with a lady in a riding-habit that would have been becoming enough even in Hyde Park.

We drove some distance up the bank of the Yenesei, intending to visit a monastery a few miles distant, but were stopped by the unusual height of the floods, and returned to pass through the two handsome squares in the middle of the town, and the smaller streets which cross the principal roads at right angles. We passed a public garden, also given by Mr. Kusnitzoff to the town. We walked there in the evening, leaving the carriages at the gates, as did several fashionables, and found inside a place for refreshments, rooms for cards, and a promenade. As we strolled about

among the trees and shrubs I asked how long they had been there, and found they were self-planted, and that the garden was an adaptation from nature. Close at hand were blacksmiths' forges, where they were shoeing horses in a curious manner.*

Before leaving our lady friends, their hospitality took a very practical turn, as Siberian hospitality generally does, for they gave us some excellent fresh butter and a jar of marmalade. Both these were of great value, and I was particularly thankful to get the latter. In order to prevent the possibility of being reduced to black bread between Krasnoiarsk and Irkutsk, we ordered to be baked a pile, three feet high, of large, flat, white loaves, with a little butter added to prevent their getting dry; and these lasted us for 600 miles.

I was anxious to open at Krasnoiarsk a depôt or an agency for the sale of the Scriptures, and, with that intent, presented an introduction at the shop of one of the principal tradesmen. We found a large store full of all manner of wares, among which, however, it was difficult to see anything small that was particularly Siberian, though I bought a string of beads, worn round the neck by Russian peasant girls, called a *gaitan*. Unfortunately the merchant was away, and I could not hear of another house of business suitable

* Outside the smithy stood four stout posts, fixed in the ground at the four corners, as it were, of an oblong figure, which posts were connected at the top by cross-pieces. Into the midst of these the horse was led. Girths were then put under him by which he could be all but lifted off the ground, suspended to the cross-beams. To prevent his kicking unadvisedly, two of his legs were bound with rope to the nearest of the posts; and thus rendered helpless, and standing on tiptoe with his remaining legs he was shod. They said that Siberian horses are too wild to allow of their being treated in English fashion, and it may be so, but the animals seemed to be equally averse to the other plan.

for what I wanted. Dr. Peacock, however, seemed to feel so strongly the importance of making the most of an opportunity to get the Scriptures circulated in the neighbourhood that he purchased 250 copies, intending to dispense them far and near. I gave him also a supply of reading matter for his hospital patients.*

Having thus spent four agreeable days at the capital of the Yeneseisk province, we left on the evening of the 27th June, with a journey before us of 600 miles to Irkutsk.† We met with an early adventure on reaching the opposite bank of the river; for we had omitted to get a special note from the post-master, without which the post-boys, waiting with their horses, would not take us on. Mr. Interpreter, therefore, at a cost of 8*s.*, and not without danger, had to spend half the night in recrossing the river and returning, whilst I "camped out" alone in the tarantass on the river's bank. I was so stiff and tired, however, with the previous night's journey to the gold-mine, that I slept soundly till, at early dawn, horses were procured, and we jogged onwards.

We had now entered a land of valleys and hills instead of a country of marshes or plains, and the scenery improved vastly. Not so, however, the roadside fare; for milk was less abundant, and consequently

* The Governor was away, but the Vice-Governor informed us that there were six prisons in the province, for which we left him upwards of 200 New Testaments and Scripture portions, and about the same number of tracts, papers, and broad-sheets. We subsequently saw the Governor at Irkutsk, and I have since heard from him that these Scriptures, etc., have been distributed as I wished, as also a further quantity I left with him to be forwarded to the prisons and hospitals of the immense province of Yakutsk.

† Since this chapter was written, Krasnoiarsk has been almost entirely destroyed by fire.

we could not so easily get curds or such diet, nor even milk to drink. But we were so anxious to get forward that we became somewhat impatient of the long time spent in heating the *samovar* and preparing for a meal. The consequence was that if, on arriving at a station, horses were to be had at once, we did as best we could about food, eating in the tarantass as we went along, and sometimes not having more than one "square meal" a day.

For a time we travelled well. We continued to go up and down hills, some of which we estimated at about 500 feet in height; and though there was usually a sufficiency of horses, yet for the first two stages they failed us. We paid a little more than post fares, and hired private steeds instead. The peasants sometimes took advantage of the occasion, when post-horses failed, to ask double fares; but as this exorbitant demand amounted to only about *2d.* a mile for each horse, it seemed better to do this for a stage than to be detained, perhaps for several hours, and then to get tired animals.

Having left Krasnoiarsk late on Friday night, we reached Kansk in good time on Sunday morning, where we spent the rest of the day, considerably fatigued with the combined effect of the recent horse-riding, tarantass driving, and insufficient rest and food. Kansk is the chief town of an *okrug*, or district, and the residence of an intelligent *Ispravnik;* and, as it possessed a small prison and hospital, we washed, dressed in our "Sunday best," and called upon this dignitary to present our letters. He told us, to our surprise, that he had received a telegram the day before from the acting Governor-General of Irkutsk,

directing him to help us forward as much as possible; and consequently he had sent east and west to all the stations in his district—a distance of nearly 200 miles—telling them to let us have horses quickly. We were rather at a loss to account for such unexpected kindness, and the more so as the Ispravnik thought the instructions had originally been sent from Petersburg. It served, however, to remind us that we were not lost sight of at head-quarters. The Ispravnik accompanied us to the prison, in which were 146 prisoners in 29 rooms, which had a Sunday look about them. Things were brushed up and "settled," as a housekeeper would say, and we distributed papers to the prisoners to read. We also gave the Ispravnik some copies of the New Testament and other reading material for the prison, for the town hospital, and for the schools of the neighbourhood; after which he invited us to his house to drink tea.

His wife was a German, which accounted for certain foreign tastes visible about the room, and for some of the pictures. We learned that the Ispravnik holds a similar position in his district or *okrug*, or circle, that a Governor does in his province,—the pay of an Ispravnik being from £100 to £150 per annum; that of a Governor from £600 to £1,000 per annum; and of a Governor-General about £3,000, the latter two having also furnished houses. The *okrug* of Kansk was 200 miles in diameter, and had a population of 40,000, with upwards of 900 miles of roads. These were kept in order by 9,000 men, each of whom was responsible for 90 fathoms of way; and it is only fair to say that we found the roads of Yeneseisk the best in Siberia. Nearly all the crime in the district, we

about the horses, I took some pamphlets and Scriptures, and, having nailed up an illustration of the "Prodigal Son," I next distributed some tracts, saying, as I did so, "*darom*," which means "gratis"; and then, showing a New Testament, I said "*dvatzat-piat kopeck*," which means 25 kopecks; or I showed a copy of the Gospels, and said "*dve-natzat kopeck*," or 12 kopecks. Usually this offer was jumped at; sometimes three or four were bought by one person; and it not unfrequently happened that the first purchaser would run off to tell others of his good fortune, and bid them lose no time in following his example. This was usually done whilst the horses were being changed; but if we stopped for a meal, and it was noised abroad in the village that tracts were being given away, we were taken by storm, and sometimes could hardly eat in peace for the numbers who came to ask for our gifts.

We had barely reached the post-station, after seeing the priest, before he came driving close on our heels for his return visit. He wore the violet velvet hat of a protopope, was dressed in a black silk cassock, with a gold chain and crucifix about his neck, and with a loose white overcoat to protect him from the dust of the road. He cordially wished us success in our work, and asked us to call again on our homeward journey.

Protopope said he would gladly become a depositary for the Bible Society; and would purchase at once 50 copies from me of the New Testament, but Kansk had not been mentioned as one of the places at which a depôt was desired. Moreover, I had been instructed, in opening a depôt, to require the depositary to sign an agreement to abide by certain terms, after which I might take an order to the value of £30. But I did not gather that our friend wished altogether to turn merchant; and therefore I thought it better to let him have the 50 copies out of hand, rather than to put him into more complicated mercantile transactions with Petersburg.

We then went to the evening service in his church, after which the Ispravnik and his wife came to return our call, bringing with them their son, a boy of 13 years of age, who was to go to a military school at Irkutsk. The father said that he did not like to send him with just any one, but that he should be thankful to be allowed to place the boy under my care, offering at the same time to pay the cost of one horse to Irkutsk, which amounted to 25 roubles.

It is a common thing in Siberian travel, when one person does not wish to occupy the whole of his vehicle, to share the expense with a fellow-passenger. I therefore consented, and stowed the boy away among the tracts and books in the second tarantass, where he seemed happy enough. His joining us was rather a help, for his father gave us an open letter to all the post-masters of his district, requesting them, if there were not a sufficiency of post-horses, to hire some immediately from the peasants. He also added a *blanco* letter, which enabled us, in case of need, to take those reserved at the post-stations for the use of the Ispravnik or his police. This is called, I believe, "*Zemski*" post, applying only to Siberia, and the horses of which, when not wanted, are sometimes lent to private travellers.

The combined result of these letters was that we got on famously, and occasionally made 200 versts in the 24 hours. This for summer travelling is good—so good, in fact, that we hardly wished to do better, as it had now become very hot, and the dust of the way rendered the journey very fatiguing.

We were still passing through an undulating country, with delightful weather; on either side of the way grass, and in it grew a large yellow flower, similar in

form to our common white garden lily. On passing the frontier from the Yeneseisk to the Irkutsk governments, it soon became apparent that our new roads were not so good as those we had left behind. We crossed many rivers, on the banks of one of which we drove through an extraordinary swarm of white butterflies. The shrubs in the neighbourhood were evidently eaten bare by their *larvæ*, the *imagines*, or perfect insects, being assembled in troops on the ground. We were now drawing near a district famous for a small kind of mosquito, the bite of which is very virulent, and is so dreaded by the people that the men working at the roadside protect themselves about the head with horsehair veils. Another place in Siberia famous for these insects is the Barabinsky steppe, where horses persecuted by them sometimes break loose, and do so to certain death. We, however, were not incommoded by them.

On the 1st of July the weather was hotter than we had hitherto experienced it, and very oppressive, though at night it became chilly. The greatest heat registered in the province of Irkutsk in 1877 was during the month of August, when it rose to 90·3, the greatest cold registered being in January, and descending to 40·2 below zero.

On the second day after leaving Kansk we were somewhat hindered by a superabundance of fellow-travellers, with whom it was very pleasant to chat over a cup of tea in the post-house, though matters were not quite so smooth when it was discovered that less than the required number of horses were forthcoming, and the question arose as to who should be first served. At one station we had to stay five hours, yet it is

only fair to add that, thanks to our excellent recommendations, this was the longest delay of the kind that fell to our lot. Travellers are sometimes obliged to wait a whole day.

On the evening of the same day, at dusk, we reached Nijni Udinsk, and, as there was a small prison in the place, I was anxious to give a few books to the Ispravnik, and pass on without stopping; the latter, however, was away, so we went to his assistant. After knocking pretty lustily at his door, a servant appeared, who informed us that his master was asleep; and to awaken a man out of sleep is in Russia no venial sin. An Anglo-Russian friend informs me that she has frequently been told, on asking for a servant, that he was asleep, and could not be waked, because *a sleeping man's soul is before his God!* We told this servant, however, that we had a letter from Petersburg; and before we left the town a messenger came to the post-house, giving me the particulars I desired, and took back a sufficiency of books for the 98 prisoners under detention.

We then started off about midnight, and on the afternoon of the following day reached a station called Telma, which in previous years has been famous as possessing a factory in which cloth, paper, glass, and soap were made, besides which they produced rough linen woven from Yeneseisk hemp, and dark unbleached cloth, spun from the wool of the Buriat sheep. The peasants generally make a rough cloth of this last material. Manufactures do not flourish in Siberia, as the raw material is grown at enormous distances from the establishments, and, when manufactured, must often be taken enormous distances to be sold; so it is found

cheaper to buy the goods imported from other countries. A suit of tweed clothes costs, I heard, £6 at Krasnoiarsk, and on the Amur I met with a gentleman ordering his clothes from Petersburg, and having them sent by post to Blagovestchensk, a distance of 5,000 miles. The factory at Telma is still standing, and is not absolutely idle, but I gathered that it is not in a flourishing condition.*

We were now only about 50 versts from Irkutsk, which, under ordinary circumstances, we ought to have reached late the same night. Another project had, however, entered into my mind. About 70 versts north of Irkutsk is the largest prison in Eastern Siberia, called the Alexandreffsky Central Prison, the normal way of visiting which would have been for us to proceed to Irkutsk, present our letters, and so drive out and return, making a journey of 90 miles. Hearing at Telma that we could reach the place from thence in two hours by going across country, spend two hours inspecting the prison, and another two hours in returning to Telma, I calculated we should get back to the main road about midnight, and so reach Irkutsk on Saturday afternoon, and be ready for a quiet Sunday. The first difficulty in the way was that the law permitted no post-horses to be employed off the high-roads; but, thanks to the obliging post-master at Telma, this obstacle was overcome by his providing others, and I determined accordingly to try and save time by taking the prison on my way. How much

* Manufacturing industry, properly speaking, has no real importance in Siberia, except in distilling from grain and potatoes the alcohol which is sold in numberless taverns. Reckoning factories and distilleries together, there were, in 1876, according to Reclus, 1,100 factories and 4,000 workmen, which produced manufactures to the value of £800,000.

was involved in that decision I little thought at the moment, but it proved afterwards highly important.

The first object of interest we passed was a large salt-factory, which, like that at Telma, had in years gone by been worked by convicts under the management of the State. This kind of labour is no longer enforced there, and free workmen are employed instead. These were the only salt-works we heard of in Siberia, but we were told of some about 40 miles from Orenburg, in the Urals. Leaving the factory behind, we struck off through the woods, and were enjoying the drive thoroughly when it occurred to our *yemstchik* that he had taken the wrong direction. Accordingly, he went a long way back, but had to retrace his steps. This caused considerable delay, as did the crossing of the river Angara. At length, through a forest of pine, we reached the summit of a hill, and were able to take in at a glance the surroundings of the large prison, which we reached at dusk. On the road we met some Polish ladies, wives of officials, to whom I explained in French our object in coming. The Director, however, was gone to Irkutsk, and his deputy said it was too late that night, but that we might inspect the prison as early as we chose in the morning. I therefore named the hour of seven, and went to the post-house to sleep.

The keepers of the post-house in this out-of-the-way place appeared somewhat perturbed at the arrival of visitors who wished to spend the night under their roof. However, in this matter Siberian post-masters have no choice, for they are bound to find accommodation for travellers, and may not charge them for it; their profits are the small sums paid for the use of the

samovar, and for such refreshments as may be provided. Our quarters were better and more comfortable than usual, as also was our supper, and we lay down for a quiet night. Early in the morning the officer in charge of the prison came to say that when he had made us the promise on the previous evening he had intended to telegraph to Irkutsk for permission, but that there was a fire in Irkutsk, and telegraphic communication was stopped. He must therefore ask us to wait until the return of the chief, who was expected hourly. Accordingly, on his arrival we were conducted to the house of the Director; and though he had been travelling all night he received us at once, accorded us a hearty reception, and introduced us to his wife and friends. He was a Pole—by name Pavolo Schwekofsky—and his house was elegantly furnished, all his servants, however, being convicts. There was an appearance of comfort, not to say of luxury, about the place; and he had in a side room a turning-lathe and English tools. To this we called attention. "Ah, yes," said he, "we could not do without the English." And then, after drinking a glass of tea, we started to see the prison.

THE ALEXANDREFFSKY CENTRAL PRISON NEAR IRKUTSK. *Page* 945.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ALEXANDREFFSKY CENTRAL PRISON.

Prison wards.—Punishment cells.—Communication with friends.—Nationalities of prisoners.—Their work.—Food.—Distribution of books.—Our reception.—Lunch.—Departure.—Runaway horses.—An accident.—Left alone.—Return to post-house.

WE found the prison a huge building, which had been originally erected for a brandy distillery. Hence it was, and sometimes still is, called the Alexandreffsky *zavod*, or factory. It contained 57 rooms, in each of which, according to size, were placed from 25 to 100 prisoners. We went into several of the ordinary wards, and found them lofty, but overcrowded. Also, in some of the oblong rooms, the inclined platforms for sleeping occupied so much space that only a narrow passage was left for walking about between them. When we entered such wards, therefore, the order was given that the men should mount the opposite edges of the platforms, and thus we passed to the end of the room and back. Further on we came to some small cells, over the doors of which was written the word "Secret"; and here I thought we might perhaps see something horrible. But the thing that struck me as worst about them was their smallness; for I should judge they could not have measured more than 8 ft. by 6 ft.,

though they were probably more than 12 ft. high. These were "punishment" cells; but were far more endurable than cells known by that name in some of our English gaols, where the prisoner is sometimes below the level of the ground, and in a state of total darkness, with all sound shut out save the rumbling of carriage-wheels in the street. In the Alexandreffsky cells there was abundance of light; there was a Russian *petchka*, or stove, just outside the door, and it was not difficult to imagine that some prisoners might prefer solitude under such circumstances to the society of the motley crew packed into the larger wards.

There is a room in the building in which prisoners are allowed to see their friends, who may come on every *maznik*, or fête day, Sundays included, to converse for five minutes, and then make way for others. If a prisoner has friends, they may bring him food any day between 11 and 12 o'clock. So, too, a prisoner may write to friends when he pleases, and receive from them money up to a rouble a week.

The total number of prisoners in (and I suppose about) this place was stated as 1,589; and as they were gathered from all parts of the Russian empire, the walking through the wards was nothing short of an ethnographical study.

Besides the ordinary Slavs of Russia in Europe, there were Finns, Poles, Tatars of Kasan, Tatars of the Crimea, and Tatars of the Caucasus and Steppes. There were Bashkirs from the province of Orenburg, where they are breeders of cattle; and the pastoral Kirghese, who roam over the steppes north of Persia. Tatars were known by their shaved heads and skull-caps, and Buriats by their unmistakable Mongolian

features. I counted half-a-dozen different nationalities in a single room.

One of the worst features in this huge prison I judged to be lack of work; for, as we went from room to room, we found convicts twirling their thumbs, and literally begging for employment. All of them, however, were under "hard-labour" sentences, some to the mines for twelve years, some to factory-work for eight and ten years, and others to *zavod* work for two and six years.

We were taken, at length, to see such of them as were occupied. We entered a good-sized room, in which there might have been 50 men making papers for cigarettes, of which they turned out 100,000 a week. Prisoners were glad to do this, as they earn a little money thereby. A man could manipulate 5,000 unfinished cases in a day; and three men working together very hard could earn 30 kopecks a day, but 20 kopecks was a fairer average. For a man, however, to earn 2½*d.* a day necessitated his sitting at work so closely as to make his chest ache. I am not clear whether the machinery and materials for making these cigarette-papers belonged to the prisoners, or to a merchant in Irkutsk who bought the papers. We visited a room or two filled with shoemakers, and gold-seekers' top-boots were shown us of their work. These were for sale at 14 shillings the pair. Outside the prison a small company of men were seen returning from making bricks, which are manufactured for the Government, and not for ordinary sale. Each man makes on an average about 100 a day. Fifty men, they told us, turn out 5,000, between 6 and 11 in the morning and 2 and 6.30 in the afternoon, for which

they get about 10*s*. There seemed, however, to be barely a tenth of the prisoners employed, at which we expressed astonishment. The authorities explained it by saying that they had no work to give them. This comparatively idle life of Siberian prisoners recalled what had been told me in Russia, that the Government now keep in European prisons many whom, but for the scarcity of suitable employment, they would send to Siberia; and I ought, perhaps, to add that a number of the convicts at Alexandreffsky were there, and had been there a long time, awaiting the decision of various committees who were considering how the Government could best dispose of them, so many of the Siberian mines having passed out of Imperial hands.

Whether our visit was too early in the day, or whether the prisoners were kept in their rooms for our inspection, I know not; but we saw none of them lounging in the yards, as in other places. The time allowed them for exercise is an hour a day. The number we saw wearing chains was comparatively small. If the convicts behave well, they are not usually kept in fetters, I heard, more than 18 months; and I certainly observed that, the further east I went, the fewer were the men in irons. We were next conducted to the kitchen, where was to be seen, in course of preparation for dinner, the uncooked meat, of which each man was said to have ½ lb. a day, including bone, and a daily allowance of 2¾ lbs. of bread. Near the prison is a garden, where some of the prisoners can work, and where they grow cucumbers, water-melons, and potatoes. A few acres of arable land, cultivated by convicts, were pointed out to us; and there was a hospital at a short distance, clean and airy, having

8 rooms, in which we found 73 patients, many of whom were suffering from *scorbutus*.

We now entered the office of the prison, and saw the books, in one of which were entered four categories of punishment, namely, that of mines, hard labour, factory employment, and no work, of which four the last seemed by far the most prevalent, and I think the worst; for not only had the poor fellows nothing to do, but they had nothing to read. To remedy this was, of course, the chief object of our visit; and the director readily entered into my plans concerning the books. The men had been asking for something to read, he said, only a day or two previously. We were glad, therefore, to leave with him 160 New Testaments and other portions of Scripture in half-a-dozen languages, and about 500 tracts and periodicals, so that there might be at least a New Testament placed in every room.

We were now anxious to depart, but this was not so easy; for by this time the officials had begun to realize that we had not come as spies or intruders, but that we had really a benevolent object in view, though they asked sundry questions before they could grasp our motives. What could be our object in coming such a long distance to visit Siberian prisons, and why should I take notes of what we saw? I said something about the luxury of doing good to the poor and unfortunate; and pointed out that, if I did not make notes of what was said, I should forget. "Besides which," I added, "perchance I may some day write about what I have seen." "Oh! then you are travelling for literary purposes, that you may bring out a book?" "No," said I; "but for all that I may perhaps write of my

travels"; after which there were given me several good-sized and well-executed photographs of the prison and its surroundings, with the remark, "Who knows? the English do such extraordinary things, we may, perhaps, see some day an engraving from these photographs in the English papers." But, whatever the motive which had brought us, they said it was very rare for them to receive such a visit, and they were highly gratified at our coming.

The director begged us to favour his wife by staying to dinner; and when for want of time I declined, all sorts of reasonable and unreasonable inducements were urged why I should do so. I remained firm, and we were then invited at least to partake of light refreshment at the house of the secretary of the prison. We there found ourselves in the midst of a family of Poles, with some good-looking daughters. The eldest was dressed in *Mala-Russiá*, or "Little Russian" costume, consisting of a morning dress of washing material, trimmed with embroidery of variegated colours, and with Russian lace. I admired this, and inquired where such embroidery could be purchased. The mother gave me a small piece as a specimen, and also presented me with a portrait of her daughter photographed in the same costume.

The photograph was taken by Malmberg of Irkutsk, and I mention it because it has won the unqualified admiration of two eminent London photographers, who pronounce that, both technically and artistically, no better could be seen in any part of the world. It is particularly choice, and, as an operator would say, "well built up." The light is good, and the background well arranged; and as a piece of artistic

workmanship it speaks well for the progress of art in Siberia that a photograph from Irkutsk should bear comparison with the best the world can produce.

After this quasi-lunch, and the exchange of sundry little souvenirs, we departed, hoping to regain the high road at Telma in about a couple of hours. We had reached the top of the hill, and begun the descent through the pine-forest; and the horses were going with a run, when one of the reins broke, and the right-wheeler began suddenly to run too wide from the centre horse. Before the yemstchik could stop his team, we came to a pine-tree at the side of the road, which the outer horse allowed to come between him and his fellow. We were going at a furious pace, and the wonder is that the whole concern, including ourselves, was not dashed to pieces. As it was, in rushing by I thought I saw the horse's head strike the tree, with a force that I expected must have killed it. We ran some distance before the remaining horses could be stopped, and then the yemstchik went back to find, as we feared, another horse dead in our service. To our surprise, however, the creature had run away. The force with which the tarantass was going had broken the remaining rein, had snapped the traces, and so allowed us to escape, by a few inches at most, a terrible accident.

We had first to search for the missing horse, now out of sight; for which purpose the yemstchik mounted one of our remaining steeds, and, subsequently, my interpreter the other, I being left alone. Presently a rough-looking man appeared coming along the road, with an extraordinary wallet slung at his side. He was curiously ornamented with a profusion of brass

buttons and decorations, some of which would have served for the dress of a Tunguse *shaman*. He turned out to be a horse-doctor, and not a robber, though he naïvely said that when he saw us at first he thought *we* were highwaymen, until the sight of the tarantass reassured him.

At length, after having been left about five hours, the yemstchik and my companion came back, but without the truant horse; so we determined to proceed with the two that remained. We accused our yemstchik of having been drinking, but he denied it. As he went on, however, he grew inconsolable at his loss of the horse, and fairly bellowed, saying that he feared he should be turned out of his place and be sent to prison. He came round gradually, too, to confess that, of the shilling I had given him for fodder, he had spent twopence in drink; and then to the interpreter, who sat on the box to drive, or see that we met with no accident, he expressed the hope that the *barin*, or gentleman, would "forgive him for being a *little* drunk."

And so it came to pass that by nightfall we got back to Telma, and found our friendly post-master about to send in search of us, as he was alarmed at our absence of 30 instead of 6 hours. After a good meal we left at midnight for Irkutsk, which under ordinary circumstances we ought to have reached early on the following morning. At one of the stations, however, there were no horses, and we had to wait four hours, which afterwards proved a mercy, though at the time I am afraid I chafed at the delay; so that we did not come in view of the city till 10 a.m.

CHAPTER XXII.

A CITY ON FIRE.

Approach to Irkutsk.—The city entered.—Remains of a fire.—A second fire.—Our flight.—Crossing of the Angara.—A refuge.—Inhabitants fleeing.—Salvage.—Firemen's efforts.—Spread of the catastrophe.—Return to lodging.—A chapel saved.—Spectacle of fire at night.—Reflections.

WHAT a vivid recollection I have of the lovely morning of that 7th of July! The sun was bright and warm, but the air was not yet hot. The road lay near the cold and swiftly-flowing Angara, and the plains over which we passed were stocked with cattle. Before us lay Irkutsk. This city, or perhaps Kiakhta, I had thought originally to make the eastward limit of our travels. Many friends had prophesied that we should never get there. Some said that I was undertaking more than I could carry out, and others that I should not be permitted by the Russians to go so far. A subtle feeling of satisfaction, therefore, stole over us as we posted along, and saw how soon these prophecies were to be falsified. The town, built on a tongue of land, formed by the confluence of two rivers, with its dozen churches, domes, and spires pointing to heaven, looked extremely pretty; and on the hills around, handsome villas, nestling among the trees, added not a little to the picturesqueness of the scene. The prospect before us, therefore, the

retrospect of what we had done, the pleasant morning, and the repose to which we were looking forward, all combined to raise our spirits, and cause us to hasten onward. Alas! we little knew how speedily the face of things would change.

At the ferry was collected a large number of common vehicles, before which, however, our post-horses took precedence. We speedily crossed, and drove through a triumphal arch, erected at the time of the annexation of the Amur, and situated at the entrance of the town. We did not proceed far before we saw where fire had destroyed two blocks of buildings, the embers of which were still smoking. But it was only similar to what we had seen at Perm and Tagil, so that we were not greatly surprised. Worse was to come. We drove to Decocq's hotel, and took apartments, paid and dismissed the yemstchiks, moved our belongings from the larger of the tarantasses, and arranged them in our rooms—or, rather, we were doing so, when the alarm was given that another fire had broken out. I clambered to the roof of the stables, and there, plainly enough, were flames mounting upwards, not a dozen houses off, and in the same street, though on the other side of the way.

The waiter said he thought the fire would not come towards the hotel, as the wind blew from the opposite direction; but I was disinclined to wait and see, and so we bundled our things back into the tarantass, and told the yemstchiks, who fortunately had not left the yard, to put to their horses, and in a few minutes we were out in the street, witnesses of a sight that is not easy to describe. Men were running from all directions, not with the idle curiosity of a London crowd

at a fire, but with the blanched faces and fear-stricken countenances of those who knew that the devastation might reach to them. They looked terribly in earnest; women screamed and children cried, and it was hard for me in the street to get an answer to any ordinary question.

Meanwhile the yemstchiks asked, Where should they go? I tried to discover where some of the persons to whom I had introductions lived, but people were too excited to tell me; and at last my companion suggested that we should go out of the town across the river. We soon put nearly a mile between us and the flames, and reached the bank of the Angara, where was a swinging ferry. The ferry was all but loaded, and would not take more than one of our two tarantasses. I therefore went with the first, leaving the interpreter to follow. On landing, the yemstchik drove along a bridge, at the end of which he motioned to me as to whether he should turn to the left or the right. To me it was just the same, but I pointed to the left; and that turning proved to be of not a little importance. I could say nothing to the yemstchik, and had therefore to wait till the ferry returned, and then crossed again, which occupied the greater part of an hour.

Meanwhile the increased smoke in the distance showed that the fire was spreading, and the inhabitants of the small suburb called Glasgova, to which I had come, were looking on in front of their houses. Among the people I noticed a well-dressed person, whom I addressed, asking if she spoke English or French. She at once inquired who I was and what I wanted. I replied that I was an English clergyman

travelling, that I had just arrived in Irkutsk, had run away from the fire, and was seeking a lodging. She answered that there were no lodgings to be had in any of the few houses on that side of the river; "but," said she, "pray come into my little house, where you are welcome to remain at least during the day." I was only too glad to do so; and, seeing that there was a small yard adjoining, I asked permission to put therein our two vehicles, in which we might sleep until some better place could be found. And thus we were a second time landed at Irkutsk, poorly enough, perhaps the reader may think, but in a far better condition, as will presently be seen, than before nightfall were many thousands of the inhabitants.

We soon found that our hostess was of good family, and an exile, though not a political, but a criminal one. On arriving at Irkutsk, the Governor-General had shown her kindness in allowing her to remain in the city, where she partly supported herself by giving lessons, and was living for the summer in this quasi country-house with a young man whom she called her brother, her little girl she had brought from Russia, and a small servant whom she spoke of as "ma petite femme de chambre." There was one tolerably spacious dwelling-room in the house, and in this were sundry tokens of refinement brought from a better home. On the wall hung a photograph of herself, as a bride leaning on the arm of her husband in officer's uniform, whilst several other photographs and ornaments spoke also of a better past.

The occasion, however, was not suited to long conversation, for the conflagration in the town was increasing. Whilst dining, we bethought ourselves

whether we could be of some service, and the outcome of our deliberations was that I offered to accompany Madame to her friends residing in the town, to see if we could be of use, whilst my interpreter stayed with the tarantasses and the little girl to guard the premises.

Madame and I, therefore, set out, accompanied by her maid. At the ferry we met a crowd of persons fleeing from the city, and carrying with them what was most valuable or most dear—an old woman tottering under a heavy load of valuable furs piled on her head; a poor half-blind nun, hugging an ikon, evidently the most precious of her possessions; a delicate young lady in tears, with her kitten in her arms; and boys tugging along that first requisite of a Russian home, the brazen *samovar*. Terror was written on all countenances. We pushed on to the principal street, and tried to hire a droshky, but it was in vain to call—they were engaged in removing valuables from burning houses, as were the best vehicles and carriages the town possessed. Even costly sleighs, laden with such things as could be saved from the flames, were dragged over the stones and grit in the streets.

Before long we came to the wide street in which were situated the best shops and warehouses, and where the fire was raging on either side and spreading. Those who were wise were bringing out their furniture, their account-books, and their treasures as fast as possible, and depositing them in the road and on vehicles, to be carried away. A curious medley these articles presented. Here were costly pier-glasses, glass chandeliers, and pictures such as one would hardly have expected to see in Siberia at all; whilst a little further on, perchance, were goods from a grocer's

or provision merchant's shop, and all sorts of delicacies —such as sweets and tins of preserved fruit, to which they who would helped themselves; and working-men were seen tearing open the tins to taste, for the first time in their lives, slices of West India pine-apples or luscious peaches and apricots. Other prominent articles of salvage were huge family bottles of rye-brandy, some of which people hugged in their arms, as if for their life, whilst other bottles were standing about, or being drunk by those who carried them. The effects of this last proceeding soon became apparent in the grotesque and foolish antics of men in the incipient stage of drunkenness.

It was curious to watch the conduct of some of the tradesmen, who seemed to hope against hope, and kept their shops locked, as if to shut out thieves, and in the hope that the fire would not reach their premises. I noticed one man, a grocer, whose doors were barred till the flames had come within two houses of his own; and then, throwing open the entrance, he called in the crowd to carry out his wares. They entered, and brought out loaves of sugar and similar goods, until one man carried out a glass-case full of *bon-bons*, at which there was a general onset in the street, every one filling his pockets amid roars of laughter. With this laughter, however, was mingled the crying of women, who wrung their hands as they emptied their houses, and saw the destroying flames only too surely approaching their homes.

In the street were all sorts of people—soldiers, officers, Cossacks, civilians, tradesmen, gentlemen, women and children, rich and poor, young and old —but not gathered in dense crowds; some were making

themselves useful to their neighbours, and a few were looking idly on. At every door was placed a jug of clean water for those to drink who were thirsty, and it would have been well if nothing stronger had been taken. The fire brigade arrangements seemed to me in great confusion. There were some English engines in the town,—one of them, of a brilliant red, bore the well-known name of "Merryweather and Sons,"—but the Siberians had not practised their engines in the time of prosperity, and the consequence was that the pipes had become dry and useless, and would not serve them in the day of adversity. The arrangements, too, for bringing water were of the clumsiest description. A river was flowing on either side of the city, but the firemen had no means of conducting the water by hose, but carried it in large barrels on wheels.

Now and then one saw a hand-machine in use, about the size of a garden engine, or a jet such as London tradesmen use to clean their pavements and their windows. Moreover, no one took command. I noticed in one case, as the flames approached the corner of a street, it evidently occurred to some that, if the house at the opposite corner could be pulled down, the fire might stop there for want of anything further to burn. They therefore got to the top of the house, and, with crowbars, unloosed the beams and threw them below; but, before they had gone on long, they changed their minds, and seemed oblivious of the fact that the fire would burn the beams equally well on the ground as when standing in a pile.

It must be confessed, however, that the fire had everything in its favour. Nearly all the houses were of wood—so completely so, that, after the calamity,

there was often nothing to mark the spot where a house had stood save the brickwork of the stove in the centre. There was a fresh breeze blowing too, and though the houses were in many cases detached, yet it frequently happened that the intervening spaces were stacked with piles of firewood, which helped to spread the conflagration.

A wooden house burning is of course a spectacle much grander than that of flames coming through the windows of a brick structure, and the heat much more intense. At Irkutsk it was sufficient to set fire to a building on the opposite side of the street, without the contact of sparks. In one case—that of a handsome shop—I noticed that the first things that caught were the outside sunblinds, which were so scorched that they at last ignited, and then set fire to the window-frames, and so to the whole building.

It soon became apparent that Madame could not reach her friends, who lived on the other side of the city, and therefore we made our way back towards the ferry, calling here and there and offering help. One friend asked us to take away her little daughter, which we did, and her husband's revolver, which I carried, and a bottle of brandy—put into the arms of the *femme-de-chambre*. Thus laden, we walked towards the river, whilst on all hands men and women were pressing into their service every available worker for the removal of their goods. A religious procession likewise was formed by priests and people with banners, headed by an ikon, in the hope that the fire would be stayed. Had such taken place, the ikon would no doubt have acquired the reputation of having the power, in common with many others, of working

miracles. As it was, there was a small chapel or oratory in the centre of the town that escaped the flames, though the houses on either side were burned. I heard this spoken of as something very wonderful, if not miraculous, and I am under the impression that it was so telegraphed to Petersburg; but, on looking at the place after the fire, the preservation of the little sanctuary seemed easily accounted for, by the fact not only that it was itself built of brick, and left no part exposed that could well take fire, but that the houses on either side happened also to be of brick, so that they did not, in burning, give off the same heat they would have done had they been of wood. One rejoiced, of course, that the building was saved; but I could not help suspecting that, half a century hence, the chapel will be pointed out as having been preserved by a miracle from the great fire of 1879.

It was evening before we reached our temporary lodging, and as the day closed the workers grew tired. Many were drunk, and others gave up in despair. The impression seemed to gain ground that nothing could be done, but that the devouring element must be left to burn itself out. Hope therefore fled, and the flames continued to spread till the darkness showed a line of fire and smoke that was estimated at not less than a mile and a half in length. It seemed as if nothing would escape. Now one large building caught, and then another, the churches not excepted. To add to the vividness of the scene, an alarm of church bells would suddenly clang out, to intimate that help was needed in the vicinity. Perhaps shortly afterwards the flames would be seen playing up the steeple, and fancifully peeping out of the apertures and windows;

then reaching the top, and presenting the strange spectacle of a tower on fire, with the flames visible only at the top, middle, and bottom. At last the whole would fall with a crash, and the sky be lit up with sparks and a lurid glare such as cannot be forgotten.

Meanwhile the inhabitants continued to flee by thousands—the swinging ferry near us crossed and recrossed incessantly, bringing each time its sorrowful load, either bearing away their valuables, or going back to fetch others. Many of the people brought such of their goods as they could save to the banks and islands of the two rivers, and there took up their abode for the night in a condition compared with which ours was comfortable.

Towards midnight the town presented a marvellous spectacle. I have already spoken of the enormous length of the line of fire when looked at laterally; but, as the darkness deepened, I walked down to a point on the bank from which could be seen the apex of the triangle, in the form of which the town was built, and where appeared a mass of flames estimated as covering an area of not less than half a square mile.

We were supposed to *sleep* that night in the tarantass, but I rose continually to watch the progress of the fire, which towards morning abated, but only because it had burnt all that came in its way. About eleven o'clock the last houses standing on the opposite bank caught fire, and thus, in about four-and-twenty hours, three-fourths of the town were consumed.*

As for myself, I had watched the fire with mingled

* The numbers of the buildings destroyed were, of stone more than 100, and of wood about 3,500, including 6 churches, 2 synagogues, and 2 Lutheran and Roman chapels, besides 5 bazaars, the custom-house.

THE BURNING OF IRKUTSK. *Page 262.*

(As seen from the Glasgova Suburbs, 7th July, 1879.)

feelings, for we had narrowly escaped. And then came the recollection of the previous delays which had contributed to our preservation—the delay in going to the Alexandreffsky prison, the runaway horse in the wood, and our subsequent impatient waiting on the road. All these played an important part in saving us, for, had we arrived ten minutes earlier, our affairs might have gone very differently. Had we reached the town on the previous day, we should, in all probability, have been at church when the fire broke out; and then it is very doubtful whether we could have saved our effects, such was the difficulty of getting assistance. Moreover, the hotel was burnt within a very short time of our leaving it, so that, when looking back upon the chain of mercies by which we had been saved, I could not feel otherwise than deeply thankful.

and the meat market. The destruction of property was estimated at £3,000,000 sterling; and since the town contained about 33,800 inhabitants, upwards of 20,000 of them probably must have been rendered houseless and homeless. From calculations made three months afterwards, it appeared that 8,000 of the inhabitants were in good circumstances; 2,000 were in the military, and 1,000 in Government employ; 6,000 were in reduced circumstances, to whom bread and corn were sold at a very low price. There were 2,500 government *employés* similarly straitened by the catastrophe, leaving about 14,000 to earn their bread as best they could.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IRKUTSK.

Province of Irkutsk.—The capital.—Its markets.—Telegraph officers.—Visit to the Governor.—Ruins of the city.—Attempt to establish a Bible depôt.—Supposed incendiarism.—Benevolent arrangements of authorities.—Wife-beating.—Servility of Russian peasants.—Visit to a rich merchant.—Ecclesiastical affairs.—Visit to the acting Governor-General.—The prisons.—A prisoner's view of them.—Prison committee.—Distribution of books.—Visit to inspector of schools.—Change of route.

THE city of Irkutsk is the capital of a government of the same name,* and was founded in 1680. Its population in 1879 was 33,000. About 4,000 gold-miners spend their winter and their money in the city, often mentioned as a cheerful place of rest for travellers coming from China, or proceeding eastward. It is 1,360 feet above the sea, and has a climate which even in winter is well spoken of, though, in the late autumn, and previous to the freezing of the Angara, the fogs from the river bring rheumatism and diseases of the throat and lungs. Little wind blows, storms are less frequent than at Petersburg or Moscow, and the snows

* Compared with some of the enormous provinces of Siberia, that of Irkutsk is comparatively small, with an area of 300,000 square miles only; that is, about the size of Sweden and Norway. The surface is mountainous, and through it flow two rivers of importance, namely, the Angara, issuing from Lake Baikal, and the Lena, which rises not far from the capital. The province is divided into five uyezds, and has a population of 380,000, of whom only 10 per cent. are dwellers in towns. Marriages 4,600, and 25,000 births are recorded in the province yearly.

are not superabundant. Whether in winter or summer, the panorama of Irkutsk and its surroundings is one of beauty. Of its 20 churches, several were planned and constructed by two Swedish engineer officers captured at Pultava, and sent into exile by the great Peter.

The markets of Irkutsk are well supplied. Fish and game are plentiful. Beef is abundant and good, and costs about 2*d.* a pound. Pork, veal, and mutton are also cheap, especially in winter, when everything that can be frozen succumbs to the frost. Frozen chickens, partridges, and other game are often thrown together in heaps like bricks or fire-wood. Butchers' meat defies the knife, and some of the salesmen place their animals in fantastic positions before freezing them. Frozen fish are piled in stacks, and milk is offered for sale in cakes or bricks. A stick or string is generally congealed into a corner of the mass to facilitate carrying, so that a wayfarer can swing a quart of milk at his side, or wrap it in his handkerchief at discretion. Whilst the products of the country are thus cheap, it should be observed that everything brought from beyond the Urals is expensive on account of the long land carriage. Champagne, for example, costs 12*s.* or 14*s.* a bottle, and porter and ale 7*s.* 6*d.*; the lowest price of sugar is 8*d.* a pound, while sometimes it costs 1*s.*; and as much as 2*s.* 6*d.* may occasionally be given for a lemon.

Much of this, however, I had to learn by report or reading; for, at the time of our visit, the Sunday's fire had upset everything, and it became a serious question on Monday morning as to what we should do. Many of the telegraph clerks in Siberia are Danes, and speak several languages. We found that we had one of them, Mr. Larsen, for a near neighbour; for the tele-

graph office had been burnt, and he had come to our side of the river to take shelter in the next house, where, having no electric battery, he had tapped the Verchne Udinsk wire, and was trying in this way, though without success, to communicate intelligence. He had had nothing to eat for 24 hours, and possessed only the clothes in which he stood; so it was quite a charity to take him a glass of tea to his temporary office in the open air, after which he dined with us. Mr. Larsen, to whom we had an introduction, had been a telegraphist in London, and spoke English fluently, so that we were able to discuss our prospects to advantage. It was of prime importance for us that we should see the Governor of the province and the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia as quickly as possible, for it was not hard to perceive that what provisions had escaped the fire would be sold at famine prices; lawlessness, it was rumoured, might get the upper hand; and it seemed better that we should leave the place without much delay. Our adviser feared, however, and reasonably so, that we should be able to get no attention from the higher officials in the present state of excitement, seeing the embers of the city were still smoking, and the authorities would naturally have more important business than ours to attend to. Mr. Larsen, however, kindly offered to accompany me over the river to see if anything could be done. Accordingly we crossed, and, walking along the broad road by the side of the Angara, the ashes of the fire scorched our faces.

We now saw something of the condition of the people who had fled to the bank of the river on the previous day, with such effects as they could save. Here were gentlefolks "camped out" under chests of drawers,

tables, and boxes, arranged in the best manner possible in the open air—sheets being used for walls, and curtains for coverings. Ikons from churches were lying about; likewise tables, heaped with philosophical instruments from the high school; and carts filled with movables. The instruments from the telegraph station were standing by a post, to which paper streamers were fastened to intimate that this was the temporary telegraph office. The people's demeanour, however, was in strange contrast with their pitiable condition; for many, having saved their samovars, were drinking afternoon tea, and on all sides were joking and laughing at their comical situation.

We found many of his friends among those beside the river, and each began good-humouredly to ask what the other lost in the fire, and what had been saved. Nobody seemed inclined to be at all dull over the matter, and the same thing was apparent with the Deputy-Governor Ismailoff, upon whom we called. "What have you lost?" said the General to my companion. He lightly threw open his coat, and intimated that *that* was all he had saved. At this the General laughed heartily, and said that he was not so well off, for that the very shirt on his back was a borrowed one! Yet the Governor had lost in the fire a brand-new house, upon which he had spent many thousands of roubles.

Contrary to our expectation, it was arranged for us to see the acting Governor-General next morning, and meanwhile we had time to look at the ruins of the city. People had taken refuge with their effects in the large squares, as well as on the banks and islands of the river. Many had fled into the neighbouring villages.

The suburbs had escaped the fire, as well as many of the houses standing in spacious grounds. A few of the churches also were untouched. The large hospital was safe, likewise the usine for smelting gold, and the Governor-General's house, but many of the public buildings had perished; amongst these the museum, in which I expected to find a good ethnographical collection. I should judge about three-fourths of the city were destroyed, and that the best part of the town; and so complete was the wreck that the *izvostchiks* with their droshkies hardly knew their way about the blackened streets.

We met a few of the higher class of exiles living free in Irkutsk, and, on asking them what they would do, received for reply, "We do not know. We have been earning something by teaching, but now our patrons will leave us. All sorts of provisions will be frightfully dear, and yet we dare not leave. So what is to be done?" The same doubts as to the future pressed heavily upon those tradesmen whose shops were not burnt.*

Of course there were various rumours afloat during the excitement of the previous day—one, that the devastation was caused by a wilful act. Similar rumours were afloat at Perm and Tagil, and at Irkutsk more than twenty arrests were reported. But, upon asking

* I was specially anxious to open a depôt for the Bible Society in Irkutsk, and to that end called upon a bookseller and printer named Sinitzun, of Harlampi Street, and invited him to become a depositary. He replied that he had the will to do so, but that he must first consult his partners; for it was doubted whether the city would be rebuilt, and whether persons having lost their premises would not, instead of re-erecting them, go and live elsewhere. I have heard, since my return, however, that the town is rising from its ashes even on a grander scale than it formerly possessed.

the Governor, it proved to be nonsense; for only two men had been arrested, and it was very doubtful whether even they were guilty. The only origin I heard given was that a hay-loft ignited, from which the flames spread.*

In Siberian towns the police are represented by the *gendarmerie;* and in other places are police-masters with their employés. There are, strictly speaking, no policemen, but Cossacks are usually employed in their stead; and at the end of their short service are allowed to go home. They are, however, anything but efficient constables, and I was told that at Irkutsk the authorities do not employ them. To protect whatever might be of value among the ruins, and to keep order after the fire, troops were marched into the city by day, and patrolled the place at night.

Great credit was due to the officials for the prompt manner in which they attempted the relief of distress. The fire was scarcely extinguished before a committee was formed, and some of the merchants laid down handsome sums. Proclamations were posted about the place, saying that officers could be furnished with dinners at the rate of 30 kopecks a plate, that bread

* The Russians have reason, however, for constant suspicion, for they have a revengeful way of "letting loose the red cock" upon a man, which means setting his house on fire; and this is only too common among the peasants of Siberia, as, in fact, generally in all Russia. Thus, of 758 fires which took place in Siberia in 1876, no less than 99, or more than one-eighth, were due to incendiaries, to say nothing of nearly 500 more of which the causes could not be traced. Further particulars relating to these 758 fires are, that 185 were registered as due to "carelessness," and 10 to lightning, whilst the estimated loss of the whole 758 was reckoned at £82,162. With such a number of fires it is not difficult to understand the dread of destruction in which Siberians live, nor their practice of having a large chest in the house, in which they habitually keep their valuables, to be removed, if necessary, at a moment's notice.

might be bought for 2 kopecks—that is, a halfpenny—a pound; and that for the first week the poor might have bread for nothing; further, that all persons burnt out might, on application, receive the sum of 30 kopecks. No serious outbreak of disorder occurred during our stay, though a good deal of drunkenness was visible. With two inebriates we were brought palpably into contact. In the yard we occupied was a small kitchen-house, where lived a woman cook, her husband, and some children. The husband had been to the fire, had been drinking, and came home accompanied by a drunken associate. The companion, referring to the cook, said, "As for that woman, she ought to be hanged"; whereupon her husband fell to beating mercilessly both her and her boy of about ten years old; and the child came to us crying, as if he were half killed. Whereupon we rushed to the rescue, and one of the party, seizing the drunken man, took him from his wife, and gave him a thrashing.*

When I got further east, I heard of a third and similar instance of wife-beating, related to me by a merchant in whose house I stayed. His servants were convicts, simply because he could get no others; but he said he was not usually curious to ask for what crimes they had been sent to Siberia. It happened,

* This assault by the husband was, as far as I know, quite unprovoked on the part of his better half, and it serves as an illustration of the way in which a certain class of the Russians treat their wives. It also serves to confirm what is written of Akoulka's husband in Dostoyeffsky's "Buried Alive," where two prisoners are talking in the night, and one relates: "I had got, somehow or other, in the way of beating her. Some days I would keep at it from morning till night. I did not know what to do with myself when I was not beating her. She used to sit crying, and I could not help feeling sorry for her, and so I beat her." Subsequently he murdered her. After which relation, the other prisoner acquiesces, and says that "wives *must* be beaten to be of any service."

however, that he had a woman-cook who was particularly well-behaved, and an excellent servant; and he asked her one day why she had been exiled. She said it was for poisoning her husband; upon which my friend opened his eyes, and said,—

"Oh, then, perhaps you will murder me?"

"Oh, no, master; I should not murder *you*."

"Yes, but if you would murder your husband, why not, some day, *me?*"

"Oh, no, master; you would not do as he did, for he beat me every day for two years."

Thus it was not altogether a meaningless form at a Russian wedding, that anciently the bridegroom took to church a whip, and in one part of the ceremony lightly applied it to the bride's back, in token that she was to be in subjection.

It should be remembered, however, that the brutal conduct just described belongs to a type well known in a certain part of England; the difference between the two being that the Russian bully beats his wife with a whip, while the English one kicks her to death. The Russian wives take very kindly to a moderate amount of such treatment, and those of the lower class do not murmur or complain, but consider the "master" has a right to chastise them; and when things do not go so far as this, they expect, when they do not please their husbands, to be slapped and corrected accordingly. In fact, the Russian wife among the lower classes does not take what we think her proper position in a house. The husband usually goes to market once a week, and buys all he wants, business of such importance not being entrusted to the wife, who therefore knows nothing even of the cost of her household articles.

Among the higher classes, also, the master usually sends his chief servant to market, and pays for all that is consumed in the house.

There came out of this quarrel between man and wife another characteristic of the Russian peasantry, which perhaps is a remnant of serfdom, and betrays their want of manliness in the presence of their superiors. My merchant friend, just referred to, had a convict in the house whilst I was there, whom once before he had dismissed for drunkenness. The man came back entreating that he might be reinstated, but his master said, "No, I have warned you continually, and done everything I could to keep you sober, but in vain." "Yes, sir," said the man; "but then, sir, you should have given me a good thrashing." So with the fighting husband at Irkutsk: after receiving his stripes he went away, but soon after came back, thanking the gentleman for his thrashing, and promising to behave better in future. In the days of serfdom, it was no uncommon thing for a gentleman to box the ears of his droshky driver; but this cannot now be done with impunity. My mercantile friend told me he was one day driving in Petersburg with a Russian gentleman, when the latter struck the isvostchik for doing something that displeased him; whereupon the man turned round and said, "No more of that, sir; those days are gone by, and if you strike me again I shall return it,"—a threat quite unbearable to a *blagorodni*, or "noble"; and he was about to go on as of old, when my friend said, "Look! you had better not; for if you are summoned, and I am called as a witness, I shall be bound to say that you began it"; whereupon he desisted.

We took an early opportunity after the fire to deliver up to General Khamenoff, its owner, the second tarantass we had borrowed at Tomsk, and in which my companion and I had driven and slept for a thousand miles. Our benefactor was in reality a rich merchant, and had given, if I mistake not, very handsome sums of money for educational purposes in Irkutsk. This patriotic action had gained him the distinction of "General." His buildings had been saved, and we thus had an opportunity of seeing the house of one well-to-do merchant at Irkutsk.

The General was getting old, and appeared in a long dressing-gown, coming out of his beautiful garden, and seating us in a little secretarial chamber, which had about it sundry marks of foreign influence and taste. Before joining us, however, he bade adieu to a previous visitor, and called his footman to open the door. There was something inexpressibly droll about his manner of doing so, for he simply gave a prolonged grunt—ugh!!—and as the footman did not come at grunt number one, it was repeated, and the servant in passing received from his master a cuff at the back of the head, doing so with a grin and a duck of the noddle, as a schoolboy receives a blow from his mother's palm, knowing that he shall not be hurt. The old gentleman then heard from us how we had escaped from the hotel, and how we were making a sleeping chamber of his tarantass, which he said we might continue to do until we left the town.

I was anxious to learn something of the state of ecclesiastical affairs in the province, and to inquire what the Russian Church was doing in her missions to the Buriats. The chief ecclesiastic of the province is one

Benjamin, Archbishop of Irkutsk and Nertchinsk, under whom is a suffragan bishop, Meleti of Selenginsk. The Diocese has 347 churches and chapels, 5 monasteries, and one nunnery. One of the monasteries is near Lake Baikal, and here lives, if I mistake not, the Bishop of Selenginsk, who could have given information about the Buriats, but the monastery lay too far out of our way to allow of our visiting it. Nor were we successful with the Archbishop; for on going to the monastery, his official residence, which had narrowly escaped the fire, we found him gone to his country residence in the suburbs. "When will he return?" we asked. "God knows," said our priest informant; thereby using an expression which I observed to be very common among all classes of Russians.*

On the Tuesday morning after the fire we were to be presented, as I have said, to the acting Governor-General of Eastern Siberia. The supreme Governor-General was Baron Friedrichs, to whom I had two private letters of introduction, besides my official documents; also we had made the acquaintance of his son when travelling on the Obi. The Baron, who was in ill-health, was at some mineral springs on the Mongolian frontier, and his place was filled at the time of our visit by M. Lochwitzky, the Governor of Yeneseisk, to whom we were presented by General Ismailoff. We met at the Governor-General's house, the finest in the city, having been originally built and furnished, regard-

* The chief ecclesiastical shrine of Irkutsk is a large church a little way out of the city. In it are the remains, gorgeously entombed, of St. Innokente, said to be preserved as fresh as when he died. This man is regarded as the apostle of Siberia. He was originally a missionary, who in 1721, was sent to China; but the Chinese Government refusing him admission to their country, he settled six years afterwards at Irkutsk.

less of expense, by an enormously rich tea merchant. We found M. Lochwitzky the first of the Siberian Governors (except the Governor-General in the West) who could converse in French. He entered readily into my plans for the distribution of books, thanked me for those I had left at Krasnoiarsk for his province, and promised to do for me what was a great boon, namely, to send some books to the town of Yakutsk, to be distributed throughout that largest province of the country. We were introduced to a Colonel Solovief, whose brother was in London, as Secretary to the Grand Duchess of Edinburgh; and after an assurance from the Governor-General that he would do all he could to further our wishes, we started to see the prisons, under the conduct of the Procureur of the town.

We drove through the ruins of the fire, and then crossed, by a wooden bridge 300 yards long, the Uska-Kofka, by which one side of Irkutsk is bounded. This stream divides the town from the prison and the workshops, where a certain number of convicts are employed.* Speaking generally, the prison seemed to me to resemble others I had seen in Siberia, and to call for no special remark. Perhaps, however, I ought to add that before I left the town I had the opportunity of hearing about the establishment from a prisoner's point of view. Thus I heard that, at six o'clock on the morning of our visit, the prisoners were told to

* There were 270 men in the prison, one room holding 21 murderers, another 28 thieves, a third 20 forgers, a fourth 28 who had been exchanging their names and punishments, and a fifth 39 who were "without passports," and so on. In one room they were making match-boxes, for which they received for themselves a tenth of their earnings. Other prisoners were making furniture, of which the materials were supplied by the prison officers, and for which, of course, they recouped themselves.

have all in order because some Englishmen were expected, and that certain objectionable things were hidden away. I thought, however, that it did not speak much for my informant's candour when, on pressing him to say what the objectionable things were, he did not tell me. Again, my informant tried to make it appear that the officers stole the prisoners' food by giving them short quantity, though he said the *quality* of the food was good enough. The Procureur said the prisoners did not eat all the food allowed them; and from the quantity of pieces of bread which we so often saw lying about in Russian prisons, I should be disposed to think this true. This seems to be so common, that we were told at Tiumen the prisoners may *sell* what they do not eat; but at Irkutsk my informant said that they did not receive more than half their allowance, and that a quarter of a pound only of meat was given for 10 men—a quantity so ridiculously small, that one could not but think that here exaggeration must have overshot the mark. Moreover, my informant told me that what he said was not from personal experience, because he was not one of the peasant prisoners whose circumstances he professed to relate.*

* The citizen prisoners, he said, were allowed in money 17½ kopecks a day, which they could spend as they pleased, and with which they could buy a pound of meat (10 kopecks), and 2½ lbs. of bread (7½ kopecks). They have, however, in Irkutsk, a liberal prison committee, who help in the matter of food—the cabbage in the soup, for instance, being provided by them; and my informant, though grumbling about almost everything else, allowed that the dinners given to the sick, which cost 20 kopecks, and all the arrangements about the prison hospital, were exceedingly good. There were even books provided for the patients, but this was through the kindness of the doctor. My non-official informant also alleged that the prison officials took from the pay of the workmen, giving them far less than the value of their labour, and so unrighteously enriched themselves.

I was told in the town that to take books to the Irkutsk prison was a work of supererogation; and I confess to a feeling of disappointment when, on asking to see the library, I was taken to a cupboard full of New Testaments and tracts, precisely the same as some of those I was distributing, but all kept so fresh and in such order that evidently no one had used them. The committee was reported to have spent as much as £30 on books for the prison, but the officials had evidently not made the books accessible to those for whom they were intended. Their excuse was that the prisoners did not ask for them; but no doubt the officials were afraid of their being torn, and that trouble would ensue, and so had kept them locked up. It reminded me of what my Finnish friend had written, that when she went to the prison, the officials said, "The books must be arranged in order, in case the inspector should come"; and thus the books were practically kept from the inmates. When the Governor asked me what I thought of the prison, I did not fail to point out the inconsistency of withholding the books;

His tone, however, was so exceedingly bitter, that had he not allowed that there was *one* good thing in connection with the prison, I should have discredited all he said, especially as he dealt so much in generals, and avoided particulars. As it was, I thought perhaps he might have spoken the truth in some respects. I heard subsequently, from another exile, that the Director of the prison received only £40 a year for salary, whilst from another I heard £120 or £150; and if either of these figures are true, it is not difficult to see that a dishonest official may be strongly tempted to take advantage (as the Russians say) "of his opportunities." These "opportunities," however, are not confined to matters of food. I heard of a prison director at Nijni Udinsk who had orders to send 30 prisoners to Nikolaefsk, which for certain reasons is a favourite place with the convicts; whereupon this director made his choice to fall upon those whose wives could pay him 25 roubles, or 50 shillings. This looks a large amount for a prisoner to pay, but my informant had in possession 50 roubles to be transferred for this purpose.

but of this he was ignorant, and he promised to look into the matter. I endeavoured also to make clear, in speech and by writing, that wherever my books or tracts went throughout the province, they were to be placed within reach at all times of the prisoners, and not to be put away in any of the libraries.

Thus we inspected the two prisons, and also saw a school built by the committee for prisoners' children; in it were 42 scholars. We visited likewise a gentleman named Sokoloff, who was the deputy-inspector of schools for Eastern Siberia. There is also an inspector of schools for Western Siberia, who lives at Omsk. I was surprised to hear of the many schools and scholars in the sparsely-populated and, for scholastic purposes, exceedingly difficult country of Eastern Siberia.* Our object in calling upon the inspector was to ask him to distribute throughout the schools copies of my tracts and periodicals, and to that end I began by showing my credentials. But upon hearing my object, he said that was quite sufficient; and he needed to see no papers, but would willingly help. He bought, moreover, on his own account, 200 New Testaments for 40 roubles, to give as prizes to the young schoolmasters on leaving the institution, by which means the books would be scattered widely.†

* Mr. Sokoloff had under his inspection, in 1878, 13 classical schools, 1 commercial, 1 industrial, 11 inferior, and 211 elementary schools, attended by 6,000 boys and 1,500 girls. These figures, moreover, were exclusive of the Amur district, and parts about the Sea of Okhotsk. There were also under his inspection two training institutions, one of them being the house at which we called—a new building for the training, at one time, of 80 village schoolmasters. Its furniture and fittings were admirable. It had an excellent museum, and a room for tutorial practice; and I was particularly struck with the number of models and apparatus for the teaching of natural science.

† Besides these sent to the inspector, we confided to M. Lochwitzky

We now considered our next step. My original idea, when leaving England, as already intimated, was to proceed to Irkutsk; and then, after running on to Kiakhta for the gratification of seeing a Chinese town, to return to Europe, and come home by the Caucasus and the Mediterranean. I had been warned before quitting London that I should see nothing of the severities of Siberian exile-life if I did not penetrate the region beyond Lake Baikal; and, travelling on the Obi, this statement was confirmed by a Russian officer in the prison service. I feared, however, I could not do this in a single summer, and that, if I went so far east, I should be unable to return before winter set in. It never occurred to me that there was any available way of reaching the Pacific from Irkutsk other than by crossing the Mongolian desert to China, and this I was not disposed to do.

But when I learned that there was a service of steamers on the Amur, this opened the way for other possibilities; and on June 21st, as we rolled away from Tomsk, there dawned upon my mind a thought, the conception of which seemed at once to promise the birth of great things. What, said I to myself, if I could go right across Asia and leave so many copies of Scripture as would suffice for putting at least a New

for the government of Yakutsk, and for Eastern Siberia generally, about 170 New Testaments and portions of Scripture, and upwards of 3,000 tracts and periodicals; and with General Ismailoff, for the province of Irkutsk, about the same number of Scriptures, but rather less of other papers. We also left with General Ismailoff 500 Finnish tracts and books for the German pastor, Ratcke; these last I have since heard from the pastor were specially acceptable, inasmuch as when he returned to Irkutsk he found all his books burnt. I have heard, too, since my return, from M. Lochwitzky, that those in his hands have been distributed according to my directions.

Testament or a copy of the Gospels in every room of every prison, and in every ward of every hospital, throughout the whole of Siberia! As I look back upon it now as an accomplished fact, the matter seems ordinary enough; but when the thought came into my mind it looked like a consummation far beyond anything I had hoped to accomplish, and a result which, if it might be compassed, would be a cause of thankfulness for the rest of my life.

Accordingly I quietly nursed the idea till we reached Irkutsk, thus far having given a sufficiency of books answerable to the plan for all the provinces behind me; and there yet remained three before me. Several boxes of books were unopened, but these could not be sent forward, because, in the first place, there was no carrier, or, if there were, the fire had confounded all order; and even if some one could be persuaded to take the books, it was very doubtful if they would reach the hands of the prisoners unless I went with them in person and showed my credentials.

I determined, therefore, to journey onward and do my best to carry out the scheme which had taken possession of my mind. But to do this it was necessary to have supplementary documents, for I had asked the Minister of the Interior for letters only as far as Kiakhta. M. Lochwitzky, however, most kindly helped in the matter, and gave me the letters I needed for my extended plans. We were then free to go forward again (which the reader may do at once, if he prefers, by missing the next two chapters); but something must first be said of the routes by which former travellers have proceeded eastwards

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LENA.

History of Russian invasion.—Former travellers to Okhotsk.—Cochrane, Erman, and Hill.—Down the Lena to Yakutsk.—Prevalence of goitre.—The Upper Lena and its tributaries.—The Lower Lena.—Discoveries of mammoths.—New Siberian islands.—Nordenskjold's passage.

WHEN, at the beginning of the 17th century, the Cossack conquerors of Siberia had crossed the Yenesei, and had pushed on as far as Lake Baikal, they were met by the numerous and warlike tribe of the Buriats, who opposed the invaders with considerable force. Not waiting, therefore, for their entire subjection (which took 30 years to accomplish), the Cossacks turned northwards to the basin of the Lena, and descended the river more than half-way to the Arctic Sea, where, coming in 1632 to the principal town of the Yakutes, they built a fort and founded the city of Yakutsk. After this they crossed the Aldan mountains, and, seven years later, reached the Sea of Okhotsk. For two centuries this was the route followed by those who would cross Siberia from the Urals to the Pacific, or *vice versâ*. In the present day there are two other roads. All must go by the route we travelled from Tomsk to Irkutsk, but from thence the Pacific can be reached either by crossing the Mongolian desert to Peking, or by traversing the Buriat steppe, and so

descending the Amur. The second of these routes is now the best, but not briefly to mention the old route would be to omit much interesting information concerning the Lena, with its native population and fossilized remains, as well as to miss the opportunity of hearing a little of some of the most daring and adventurous journeys of previous travellers.*

The most remarkable of these was an Englishman named John Dundas Cochrane, a captain in the Royal Navy, who, in 1820, proposed to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that they should give their sanction and countenance to his undertaking alone a journey into the interior of Africa, with a view to ascertaining the course and determination of the river Niger. This they declined, whereupon he procured two years' leave of absence, and resolved to attempt "a walking tour" round the globe, as nearly as could be done by land, crossing from Northern Asia to America at Behring's Straits, his leading object being to trace the shores of the Polar Sea along America by land, as Captain Parry

* I allude to the accounts of Strahlenberg, De Lesseps, Billings, Ledyard, Dobell, Gordon, Cochrane, Erman, Cotterill, and Hill.

Strahlenberg was a Swedish officer, who, at the beginning of the 18th century, was banished for 13 years to Siberia. He collected a vast amount of information concerning the country generally, and compiled polyglot tables of aboriginal languages, and amongst them that of the Yakutes inhabiting the valley of the Lena, of whose Pagan condition he gives many illustrations.

M. de Lesseps was French Consul and interpreter to Count de la Perouse, the well-known circumnavigator. De Lesseps entered the country at Kamchatka in 1788, and wrote an account of his travels across Siberia and Europe to Paris.

Captain Billings was an Englishman, who, after sailing with the celebrated Captain Cook, was employed by the Empress Katharine II. to make discoveries on the north-east coast of Siberia, and among the islands in the Eastern Ocean stretching to the American coast. For this purpose

was at the time attempting it by sea. Accordingly he left London with his knapsack, crossed the Channel to Dieppe, and then set out. This gentleman was endowed with an unbounded reliance upon his own individual exertions, and his knowledge of man when unfettered by the frailties and misconduct of others. One man, he said, might go anywhere he chose, fearlessly and alone, and as safely trust himself in the hands of savages as among his own friends. His favourite dictum was that an individual might travel throughout the Russian empire, except in the *civilized* parts between the capitals, so long as his conduct was becoming, without necessaries failing him. He put his principle rather severely to the test, and it must be allowed that he did so with very general success, for he states that in travelling from Moscow to Irkutsk (4,000 miles by his route) he spent less than a guinea. From Irkutsk he descended the Lena to Yakutsk, from whence, accompanied by a single Cossack, he penetrated in a north-easterly direction almost to the shores of the Ice Sea at Nijni Kolimsk, where, having altered his plans, he turned back by a most difficult route to Okhotsk.

he proceeded to North-Eastern Siberia in 1785, sailed down the river Kolima, explored a portion of the country eastward, and then returned by way of Yakutsk.

Another of Captain Cook's officers, John Ledyard, had the most romantic enthusiasm for adventure, perhaps, of any man of his time. He conceived the project of travelling across Europe, Asia, and America as far as possible on foot, and to this end he set out from London with about £50 only in his pocket. He reached Yakutsk, where he met with Captain Billings, and with him was hoping to proceed to America, when, by order of the Russian Court, Ledyard was arrested on suspicion of being a French spy, and was taken off to Moscow.

Another journey across Northern Asia was made after the time of Billings by Peter Dobell, a counsellor of the Court of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia. Dobell landed in Kamchatka in 1812, and from thence proceeded overland to Europe.

From this place he sailed to Kamchatka, and married a native, whom he brought by sea back to Okhotsk, and then in winter crossed the Aldan mountains to Yakutsk, whence the happy pair proceeded to Irkutsk, and at length reached England, where Mrs. Cochrane, as I learn from the daughter of one who knew her, was carefully educated, and passed as a lady in good society. For enterprise and bravery this captain, I take it, easily bears off the palm from all Siberian travellers.*

The writer who has added most, perhaps, to our scientific knowledge of the valley of the Lena is M. Adolph Erman, who crossed Siberia in 1828, in conjunction, though not in company, with Professor Hansteen, the first professor at the Magnetic Observatory at Christiania, in Norway, and famous for his researches in terrestrial magnetism. They both travelled for the purpose of making magnetic and other observations; but, on arriving at Irkutsk, Professor Hansteen returned to Europe, whilst Erman continued down the Lena to Yakutsk, crossed to the Sea of Okhotsk, and so continued round the world.†

Later on, one more Englishman has reached the Pacific by way of the Lena, namely, Mr. S. S. Hill, who did so in 1848, and it is not unlikely that he may, for some time, be the last of the intrepid travellers who have accomplished this feat, since the Amur is

* Another journey from Okhotsk up the Lena to Irkutsk and Kiakhta, and then across Siberia to Europe, was made about 1820 by a merchant named Peter Gordon; but his notes are very short, and appear only in his "Fragment of a Tour through Persia."

† Professor Erman received the Patron's gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1844, for his scientific researches in physical geography, meteorology, and magnetism around the globe in 1828-30. His researches in Northern Asia were of especial value, particularly in Eastern Siberia and Kamchatka.

now open to the Russians, and presents a far easier way of crossing the continent.

To follow the older route, the first portion had to be traversed by post vehicles from Irkutsk, a distance of 160 miles in a north-easterly direction. The road crosses the water-parting of the Lena basin at or near the station Khogotskaya, which is about 90 geographical miles from Irkutsk. The traveller journeys through a hilly country, where there is abundant pasture, and where the land is to some extent cultivated, to the village of Kachugskoe, situated on the banks of the Lena. Here various sorts of merchandise are embarked in large flat-bottomed boats, which are floated down the river. These goods are exchanged with the natives for furs, the boats at the end of the journey being broken up in districts where timber is scarce, and the furs brought back in smaller craft.*

The descent of the Upper Lena to Yakutsk by water was undertaken by Mr. Hill in spring, and by Captain Cochrane in autumn, but Mr. Erman accomplished it on the ice in winter, by a 20 days' sledge journey of nearly 1,900 miles. As he passed along he observed, first in the village of Petrovsk, several of the women largely affected with goitre, and learned

* It was in one of these flat-bottomed boats that Mr. Hill descended the stream, in company with a Russian merchant, accomplishing the journey to Yakutsk in 21 days, with no worse mishaps by water than occasionally being driven on sand or mud banks, or into a forest of trees, all but submerged by the height of the spring floods.

Captain Cochrane chose a more independent course. Being furnished with a Cossack, he drove from Irkutsk to the Lena, and, having procured an open canoe and two men, paddled down the stream. Proceeding day and night, they usually made from 100 to 120 miles a day, finding hospitable villages at intervals of from 15 to 18 miles, as far as Kirensk, and so arrived on the eighth day at Vitimsk. It was now late in the autumn, and the ice began to come down the river, which sometimes compelled

with surprise that this malady, which in Europe characterises the valleys of the Alps, is frequent on the Lena. As he proceeded he found goitre in men also, and asking an exile at Turutsk, who appeared the only healthy person in the place, how he had protected himself from goitre, was told that adults arriving from Europe were never attacked by the disease, but that the goitre was born with the children of the district, and grew up with them. Medical men in Switzerland say that goitre proceeds from deposits in chemical combination, washed down by mountain streams that supply the inhabitants of the neighbourhood with drinking water, and that it attacks children on account of their mucous membranes being very tender and easily distended. Mr. Erman inquired carefully, as he went on, respecting the prevalency of goitre, and having made barometrical and other observations along the way, he came at length to the conclusion that the disease was traceable, in part, to the formation and altitude of various places along the valley of the river, where the air, being confined, is, in summer, heated to an extraordinary degree, and loaded with moisture.

With regard to the stream of the Upper Lena, its head waters have their sources spread out for 200 geographical miles along the counter slopes of the hills

the natives to strip, and, up to their waists in water, to track the boat, and this with the thermometer below freezing-point. At length the captain, in consequence of the difficulties of boating, was requested at one of the villages to proceed on horseback, which he did, and, being unable at the next station to get either horses or boat, he had to shoulder his knapsack and walk; and so, by means of walking, riding, and paddling, he reached Olekminsk. From thence to Yakutsk is about 400 miles, which, excepting the two last stages, the captain completed in a canoe, arriving on the 6th October. The weather was cold, snow was falling, and on approaching Yakutsk the canoe was caught in the ice, so that he was compelled to make the remainder of his journey on foot.

that form the western bank of Lake Baikal, and the main stream rises within seven miles of the lake.

At Kachugskoe, about 60 geographical miles from the Baikal, and not less than 75 geographical miles in a straight line from its source, the Lena measures about the width of the Thames in London. The water, deep and clear, has in spring a very rapid current, though Captain Cochrane speaks of the rate lower down, in autumn, as only 1½ or 2 knots per hour. The next station after Kachugskoe is Vercholensk, a town of 1,000 inhabitants, the first of that size on the north-east of Irkutsk, and is the chief town of the uyezd. After flowing 500 miles further through a hilly country, with high banks always on one and sometimes on both sides, on which are 35 post-stations and more villages, the river passes Kirensk, which again is the chief town of an uyezd, and has a population of 800.* Here cultivation practically ceases, except for vegetables. At this point, too, the river receives on its right the Kirenga, which has run nearly as long a course as the Lena. The stream thus enlarged now flows on for 300 miles more to Vitimsk, where it is joined by its second great tributary, the Vitim, from the mountains east of Lake Baikal. Another stretch of 460 miles, through a country still hilly, but with villages less frequent, brings the traveller to Olekminsk, the capital of another uyezd, a town of 500 inhabitants; there the Lena receives from the south the Olekma, which rises near the Amur river. It then continues for 400 miles through a sparsely-

* The difference of latitude, as pointed out by Mr. Trelawney Saunders, between Verko (or upper) Lensk (54° 8′) and Kirensk (57° 47′) is only 3° 39′, or 219 geographical miles. The latter place is but little east of north from the former, so that the 500 miles must be mainly due to the windings of the stream.

populated district, till it reaches Yakutsk, where it is 4 miles wide in summer, and 2½ in winter, the river being usually frozen about the 1st October, and not free from ice till about May 25th.

Hitherto the course of the river has been to the north-east, but at Yakutsk the stream makes a bend and runs due north, receiving on its right, 100 miles below Yakutsk, one of its largest tributaries, the Aldan, which rises in the Stanovoi range bordering on the Sea of Okhotsk. Yakutsk is only 270 feet above the sea, and the current of the river henceforth is sluggish. About 50 miles further the Lena receives its largest tributary from the left, the Vilui, and then proceeds majestically through a flat country with an enormous body of water to the Arctic Ocean, into which it enters among a delta of islands formed of the *débris* brought down by the river.

In the region of the Lower Lena, and to the westward, have been found the remains of a huge rhinoceros, and an elephant larger than that now existing—the *elephas primigenius*, popularly called the mammoth. It is so named from the Russian *mamont*, or Tatar *mamma* (the earth), because the Yakutes believed that this animal worked its way in the earth like a mole; and a Chinese story represents the *mamentova* as a rat of the size of an elephant which always burrowed underground, and died on coming in contact with the outer air. The tusks of the mammoth are remarkable for exhibiting a double curve, first inwards, then outwards, and then inwards again; and Professor Ramsay gives it me as the opinion of several able naturalists that the so-called mammoth is of the same species as the Indian elephant, only much altered by the change

of climatic conditions. The Samoyedes say that the mammoth still exists wandering upon the shores of the Frozen Ocean, and subsisting on dead bodies thrown up by the surf. As for the rhinoceros, they say it was a gigantic bird, and that the horns which the ivory-merchants purchase were its talons. Their legends tell of fearful combats between their ancestors and this enormous winged animal.

A trade in mammoth ivory has been carried on for hundreds of years between the tribes of Northern Asia and the Chinese; but it was a long time before European naturalists took a marked interest in the evidence of an extinct order of animals which these remains undeniably recorded. The Siberian mammoth agrees exactly with the specimens unearthed in various parts of England, especially at Ilford in the valley of the Thames, near London, and on the coast of Norfolk; but whereas on European soil there remain but fragments of the skeleton, there have been found in Siberia bones of the rhinoceros and mammoth covered with pieces of flesh and skin. These discoveries date back more than a century.*

* In December, 1771, a party of Yakutes hunting on the Vilui, near its junction with the Lower Lena, discovered an unknown animal half-buried in the sand, but still retaining its flesh, covered with a thick skin. The carcase was too much decomposed to allow of more than the head and two feet being forwarded to Irkutsk; but they were seen by the great traveller and naturalist, Peter Simon Pallas, who pronounced the animal a rhinoceros, not particularly large of its kind, which might perchance have been born in Central Asia.

In the year 1799 a bank of frozen earth near the mouth of the Lena broke away, and revealed to a Tunguse, named Schumachoff, the body of a mammoth. Hair, skin, flesh and all had been preserved by the frost; and seven years later Mr. Adams, of the Petersburg Academy, hearing of the discovery at Yakutsk, visited the spot. He found, however, that the greater part of the flesh had been eaten by wild animals and the dogs of the natives, though the eyes and brains remained. The

In 1865 the captain of a Yenesei steamer learnt that some natives had discovered the preserved remains of a mammoth in latitude 67°, about 100 versts west of the river. Intelligence was sent to Petersburg, and Dr. Schmidt was commissioned to go and examine into the matter. Accordingly he proceeded down the Yenesei to Turukhansk, and thence to the landing-place nearest the mammoth deposit, hoping to obtain the animal's stomach, and, from the character of the leaves within, infer the creature's *habitat*, since it is known that the beast lived upon vegetable food, but of what exact character no one has yet determined. Unfortunately the stomach was wanting.

In examining, under the microscope, fragments of vegetable food picked out of the grooves of the molar teeth of the Siberian rhinoceros at Irkutsk, naturalists have recognised fibres of the pitch-pine, larch, birch, and willow, resembling those of trees of the same kind which still grow in Southern Siberia. This seems to confirm the opinion, expressed long ago, that the rhinoceros and other large pachyderms found in the alluvial soil of the north used to inhabit Middle Siberia, south of the extreme northern regions where

entire carcase measured 9 ft. 4 in. high, and 16 ft. 4 in. from the point of the nose to the end of the tail, without including the tusks, which were 9 ft. 6 in. in length if measured along the curves. The two tusks weighed 360 lbs., and the head and tusks together 414 lbs. The skin was of such extraordinary weight that ten persons found great difficulty in carrying it. About 40 lbs. of hair, too, were collected, though much more of this was trodden into the sand by the feet of bears which had eaten the flesh. This skeleton is now in the Museum of the Academy at Petersburg.

Again, in 1843, M. Middendorf found a mammoth on the Taz, between the Obi and the Yenesei, with some of the flesh in so perfect a condition that it was found possible to remove the ball of the eye, which is preserved in the Museum at Moscow.

their skeletons are now found; but Mr. Knox, who travelled for some distance with Schmidt on his return journey, says that the doctor estimated that the beast had been frozen many thousands of years, and that his natural dwelling-place was in the north, at a period when perhaps the Arctic regions were warmer than they now are. Covered with long hair, the animal could certainly resist an Arctic climate; but how on the tundras of the north could the animal have found the foliage of trees necessary for its subsistence? Must we conclude that formerly the country was wooded, or that the mammoth did not live where its skeletons are now found, but further south, whence its carcase has been carried northward by rivers, and frozen into the soil? These are questions debated among geologists, and still awaiting solution.

The fact, however, remains, that mammoth ivory is still an important branch of native commerce, and all travellers bear witness to the quantities of fossil bones found throughout the frozen regions of Siberia.*

Each year, in early summer, fishermen's barques

* It has been suggested that the abundant supplies of ivory which were at the command of the ancient Greek sculptors came by way of the Black Sea from the Siberian deposits. So far back as the time of Captain Billings, Martin Sauer, his secretary, tells us of one of the Arctic islands near the Siberian mainland, that "it is a mixture of sand and ice, so that when the thaw sets in and its banks begin to fall, many mammoth bones are found, and that all the isle is formed of the bones of this extraordinary animal." This account is to some extent corroborated by Figuier, who tells us that New Siberia and the Isle of Liakov are for the most part only an agglomeration of sand, ice, and elephants' teeth; and at every tempest the sea casts ashore new quantities of mammoths' tusks. Reclus speaks of an annual find of 15 tons of mammoth ivory, representing about 200 mammoths; and, about 1840, Middendorf estimated the number of mammoths discovered up to that time at 20,000.

direct their course to the New Siberian group, to the "*isles of bones*"; and, during winter, caravans drawn by dogs take the same route, and return charged with tusks of the mammoth, each weighing from 150 lbs. to 200 lbs. The fossil ivory thus obtained is imported into China and Europe, and is used for the same purposes as the ordinary ivory of the elephant and hippopotamus.

We cannot leave the Lower Lena and the neighbouring shores of the Arctic Ocean without alluding to the wonderful sight those shores witnessed in 1878, for the first time in the history of the world. It was no less a sight than that of two steam vessels that had ploughed their way from Europe round Cape Cheliuskin. One of them was the *Vega*, in which was Professor Nordenskjold, whose intention had been to anchor off the mouth of the Lena, but a favourable wind and an open sea offered so splendid an opportunity of continuing his voyage that he did not neglect it. He sailed away, therefore, on the 28th of August, direct for Fadievskoi, one of the New Siberian islands, where he intended to remain some days, and to examine scientifically the remains of mammoths, rhinoceroses, horses, aurochs, bisons, sheep, etc., with which these islands are said to be covered. The *Vega* made excellent progress, but though, on the 30th, Liakov Island was reached, the professor was unable to land, owing to the rotten ice which surrounded it, and the danger to which the vessel would have been exposed in case of a storm in such shallow water.

After the *Vega*, with Nordenskjold on board, had left its sister ship the *Lena*, the latter vessel, under the command of Captain Johannesen, started to ascend

the river of its own name. A pilot had been engaged to descend the river and await the arrival of the *Lena*, but as neither he nor his signals were visible, the captain, after considerable difficulty, from the shallowness of the water, made his way through the delta, and on the 7th September reached the main stream, where the navigation was less difficult. Yakutsk was reached on the 21st September, dispatches were sent on to Irkutsk, and from thence it was telegraphed to Europe that the rounding of Cape Cheliuskin and the navigation of the Lena by a steamer from the Atlantic had been accomplished.

CHAPTER XXV.

YAKUTSK.

The province of Yakutsk.—Rivers.—Minerals.—The town of Yakutsk.—Its temperature.—Inhabitants.—The Yukaghirs.—The Yakutes.—Their dwellings.—Food.—Dress.—Products.—Occupations.—Industries.—Language.—Religion.—Route from Yakutsk to Okhotsk.—Reindeer riding.—Summer journey.—Treatment of horses.

THE province of Yakutsk is the largest in Siberia, and covers an area of no less than a million and a half of square miles, and is therefore nearly as large as the whole of Europe, omitting Russia.* The total population of this enormous province is 235,000,—that is to say, it has about one-seventh part of an inhabitant to each square mile. The yearly number of marriages is 5,000, and the births 12,000. The Russian town population in 1876 numbered about 2,000, and the

* It is bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean, on the west by the Yeneseisk, and on the east by the Sea-coast provinces; whilst on its south lie the three provinces of Irkutsk, Trans-Baikal, and the Amur. The northern and western portions of the province are flat, but towards the south and south-east are the Yablonoi and Stanovoi mountain ranges, continuations, in a north-easterly direction, of the mighty Altai chain. The great river of the province is the Lena, whose waters are drained from an area of 800,000 square miles. From the slopes on the western side of Baikal its upper portion runs in a north-easterly direction as far as Yakutsk, after which the Lower Lena runs due north to the Arctic Ocean. The total length of the river is about 2,500 miles, with a fall of 3,000 feet. East of the Lower Lena are the rivers Yana, Indigirka, and Kolima, all of which are navigable and of considerable size, though small by comparison with their gigantic sister.

country population 5,000; of which there were hereditary nobles, 100; personal nobles, 450; ecclesiastical persons, 600; military, 1,700; and the rest, upwards of 220,000, were natives—that is to say, Tunguses, Yukaghirs, and Yakutes. The natives are divided into communities, under *golovahs*, or mayors, of their own race, who are, however, subject to the Russian authorities. The province is divided into five uyezds.

The chief mineral product is gold, which has frequently to be procured from frozen ground. The valleys of the Vitim and Olekma especially are rich in this mineral. In the valley of the Vitim, about 200 versts from its mouth, are quarries of mica, from which the whole of Siberia was formerly supplied with a substitute for window-glass. Mr. Erman procured plates of brown mica from one to two feet square. As, however, I saw glass used everywhere, I presume that the demand for mica must have diminished greatly.

In the forests of the Vitim and Olekma are caught the smallest sables, with the finest, blackest, and hence most valuable furs. The squirrels of the district are hunted only in winter, when they are sometimes black and sometimes bright grey, their fur in summer being red, the hair loose, and skin valueless. The black realize the highest price, and are frequently met with south of the river, while north of the Lena none but grey are captured. The hunters think that this difference depends upon the nature of the forest.*

* There are, says M. Reclus, nearly 50 species of fur animals, and millions of specimens killed during the hunting season. The annual export of furs from Siberia, not including those taken from sea animals, represents a gross value of nearly half a million sterling. The fur which regulates the price of all others is that of the sable, which is worth at least from 16*s.* to £1, and sometimes commands, even in Siberia, as much as

The town of Yakutsk, which the natives proudly call "the city of the Yakutes," presents a curious medley of dwellings; for there are seen not only the Government buildings, and the wooden houses of the Russians, but also the less pretentious winter dwellings of the Yakutes, and even their summer yourts. Oxen here take the place of horses. Women and girls ride them astride; their sledges also are often drawn by them, the driver being mounted on one of the animals. The cathedral is built of stone, and dedicated to St. Nicolas, and there are in the town some half-dozen churches in which certain parts of the service, if not the whole, are performed in the Yakute language. The chief ecclesiastic is Dionysius, Bishop of Yakutsk and Viluisk, who has in his hyperborean diocese 49 churches and chapels, and one monastery containing 13 monks.

Yakutsk has the credit of being the coldest place upon the face of the earth. The mean temperature of the air is 18·5 Fahrenheit. A degree of cold takes place there every year between the 17th December and 18th February, exceeding 58° below zero. During Mr. Erman's stay the cold reached even 71·5 below zero. Mercury, therefore, is frozen at Yakutsk for

£6 a skin. Only the back of the animal is used for the best garments, one of which may contain 80 skins, and rise to the value of nearly £500. The fur of the black fox is still more appreciated, and a single skin sometimes fetches £30. Squirrel skins by themselves constitute about a third of the Siberian revenue from furs; ten, twelve, and even fifteen millions of these animals being killed during their migrations in a single year. China receives a considerable number of these skins at Kiakhta, but more find their way to Europe. The furs brought to the fair of Irbit in the Urals in 1876 were as follows:—

Grey squirrels	5,000,000 skins	Martens of various kinds	750,000 skins
Ermines	215,000 ,,	Sables	12,000 ,,
Hares	300,000 ,,	Others	200,000 ,,
Foxes	82,000 ,,		

one-sixth of the year. An exceedingly warm summer follows this cold winter, and continues from about the 12th May to the 17th September. The ground is then thawed three feet deep, and though the crops rest on perpetually frozen strata, yet they produce fifteen-fold on an average, and in particular places forty-fold.*

Yakutsk has a population of 4,800, some of whom are political exiles, Scoptsi, etc., who live both here and in the villages along the river. It would require no great stretch of the imagination, however, to call all the Russian inhabitants exiles, for they are upwards of 5,000 miles from Petersburg.† As we travelled on the Obi we had for fellow-passengers an official with four children and a woman, bound for Yakutsk; and when, outside Tomsk, we saw the party stowed into one tarantass, we

* It is well known that in the northern parts of Siberia the ground is always frost-bound, but to what depth is not so easily determined. During the stay, however, of Mr. Erman at Yakutsk it happened that a resident was digging a well, down which the man of science went, and pronounced that he found the soil frozen to a depth of 50 feet below the surface. So accustomed, however, do the natives become to the cold, that with the thermometer at unheard-of degrees below freezing point, the Yakute women, with bare arms, stand in the open-air markets, chattering and joking as pleasantly as if in genial spring. Inside their houses, in the heated part of the rooms, they get the temperature up to 65° or 75°; but one day, when the thermometer stood at 9°, Mr. Erman found the children of both sexes running about quite naked, not only in the house, but even in the open air. In fact, the great cold is not thought a grievance in Siberia, for a man clothed in furs may sleep at night in an open sledge when the mercury freezes in the thermometer; and, wrapped up in his pelisse, he can lie without inconvenience on the snow under a thin tent when the temperature of the air is 30° below zero.

† I was told by a legal authority that some of the political exiles are sent to the province of Yakutsk, but, after the figures just quoted, it would seem that their number cannot be very large; of hereditary nobles in the province there were said to be, in 1876, only 100, and of personal nobles only 450. If, then, there be deducted from these the Governor and his staff, military officers, and tchinovniks of all grades, there would not be left a large margin for the class from which political exiles are thought to come, supposing, that is, that they are included in this return.

pitied them in prospect of the remainder of their 3,000 miles' journey.

The Russian population of the province is confined almost exclusively to the banks of the Upper Lena, Yakutsk, and its neighbourhood. The Tunguses are found at the extreme east and west of the province, and have been already spoken of in a previous chapter.

Of another race, the Yukaghirs, it may suffice to say that they were computed, in 1876, at only 1,600 in number, and that very little is known of them. They roam over a tract on the shores of the Northern Ocean lying between the Yana and the Kolima. They were once powerful, and on the rivers Yana and Indigirka tumuli and ancient burial-places are pointed out, containing corpses armed with bows, arrows, and spears. With these, too, lies buried the magic drum, well known in Lapland. At one time there were more hearths of the Yukaghirs on the banks of the Kolima than stars in the sky—so their legend says. These people maintain themselves during the whole year on the reindeer they kill in spring and autumn. At such seasons the mosquitoes drive the tormented animals to take refuge in the rivers, and not until winter is coming do they return to the woods, the stags leading the way, followed by the hinds and their young. Posted under cover, the Yukaghirs discover the place where the herd will make the passage of a stream, and conceal their canoes under the banks till the animals take the water. Then they push out, and, having cut the helpless deer off from either shore, proceed to slaughter them, whilst swimming, with long spears, which they use with marvellous skill.

The Yukaghirs are great smokers; their tobacco—the coarse species of the Ukraine—they mix with chips

to make it go further; and in smoking not a whiff is allowed to escape into the air, but all is inhaled and swallowed, producing an effect somewhat similar to a mild dose of opium. Tobacco is considered their first and greatest luxury. Women and children all smoke, the latter learning to do so as soon as they are able to toddle. Any funds remaining after the supply of tobacco has been laid in are devoted to the purchase of brandy. A Yukaghir, it is said, never intoxicates himself alone, but calls upon his family to share the drink, even children in arms being supplied with a portion.

In the centre of the Yakutsk province, occupying the valley of the Lena, roam the Yakutes, some of whom I met as far off as Nikolaefsk. They are of middle height, and of a light copper colour, with black hair, which the men cut close. The sharp lines of their faces express indolent and amiable gentleness rather than vigour and passion. They reminded me of North American Indians; and I agree with Erman, who says that their appearance is that of a people who have grown wild rather than of a thoroughly and originally rude race. Those I saw, however, having been long settled among the Russians, had perhaps become somewhat more polished than their wandering brethren. As a race they are good-tempered, orderly, hospitable, and capable of enduring great privation with patience; but in independence of character they contrast unfavourably with their Tunguse neighbours. Lay a finger in anger on one of the Tunguses, and nothing will induce him to forget the insult; whereas with the Yakutes, the more they are thrashed the better they work.*

* Strahlenberg divides them into 10 tribes, and Syboreen's Almanack for 1876 gives their number at 210,000. They belong to the great Turk family, and hence their Siberian locality is remarkable, because the Turks

The winter dwellings of the people have doors of raw hides, and log or wicker walls calked with cow-dung, and flanked with banks of earth to the height of the windows. The latter are made of sheets of ice, kept in their place from the outside by a slanting pole, the lower end of which is fixed in the ground. They are rendered air-tight by pouring on water, which quickly freezes round the edges; and the fact that it takes a long time to melt these blocks of ice thus fixed is highly suggestive of what the temperature must be, both without and within. The flat roof is covered with earth, and over the door, facing the east, the boards project, making a covered place in front, like the natives' houses in the Caucasus. Under the same roof are the winter shelters for the cows and for the people, the former being the larger. The fireplace consists of a wicker frame plastered over with clay, room being left for a man to pass between the fireplace and the wall. The hearth is made of beaten earth, and on it there is at all times a blazing fire, and logs of larch-wood throw up showers of sparks to the roof. Young calves, like children, are often brought into the house to the fire, whilst their mothers cast a contented look through the open door at the back of the fireplace. Behind the fireplace, too, are the sleeping-places of the people, which in the poorer dwellings consist only of a continuation of the straw laid in the cow-house.

In the winter they have but about five hours of daylight, which penetrates as best it can through the icy windows; and in the evening all the party sit round

have ever been the people to displace others, whereas the Yakutes have been themselves displaced, and driven into this inhospitable climate, it is supposed, by the stronger Buriats.

the fire on low stools, men and women smoking. The summer yourts of these people are formed of poles about 20 feet long, which are united at the top into a roomy cone, covered with pieces of bright yellow and perfectly flexible birch bark, which are not merely joined together, but are also handsomely worked along the seams with horsehair thread.

The houses are not overstocked with furniture, and the chief cooking utensil is a large iron pot. At the time of the invasion of the Russians, this article was deemed such a treasure that the price asked for a pot was as many sable-skins as would fill it. They use also in winter a bowl-shaped frame of wicker-work, plastered with frozen cow-dung, in which they pound their porridge. With regard to their food, the Yakutes, if they have their choice, love to eat horse-flesh; and their adage says that to eat much meat, and grow fat upon it, is the highest destiny of man. They are the greatest gluttons. So far back as the days of Strahlenberg, it was said that four Yakutes would eat a horse. They rarely kill their oxen for food; and at a wedding, the favourite dish served up by the bride to her future lord is a boiled horse's head, with horse-flesh sausages. When, however, horse-flesh or beef is wanting, they are not at all nice as to what they consume, for they eat the animals they take for fur, and woe to the unfortunate horse that becomes seriously injured in travel! It is killed and eaten then and there, the men taking off their girdles to give fair play to their stomachs, which swell after the fashion of a boa-constrictor. Thus earnestly do they aspire to their notion of the highest destiny of man! Milk is in general request among them, whether from cows or mares; and when they are

in the neighbourhood of the Russians, and can get flour, they do so; but far away in the forests they make a sort of porridge or bread, not exactly of sawdust, but of the under bark of the spruce, fir, and larch, which they cut in small pieces, or pound in a mortar, mixing it with milk, or with dried fish, or boiling it with glutinous tops of the young sprouts. In spring, when the sap is rising, they gather their bark harvest. They make also fermented beverages of milk; and in the height of summer, when the mares foal, an orgie is held, at which the men drain enormous bowls of this intoxicating liquor; whilst the women, denied the privilege of intoxication, solace themselves by getting as near to it as they can by smoking tobacco. The distillation of sour milk is also practised, producing a coarse spirit known as *arigui*. They devour likewise enormous quantities of melted butter. This also can be prepared in such a way as to cause intoxication when taken in sufficient quantities.

The dress of the Yakutes resembles in its main features that of the other natives of Siberia, save, perhaps, that they are fonder of ornaments. Both sexes riding a good deal on oxen and horses, a perpendicular slit is made up the back from the bottom of the *sanayakh*, or upper garment, in order to render the wearer comfortable in the saddle, and some of the women add behind them a cushion or pad, to save them from the rough motion of the animals. During the milder part of the year a robe, made of very pliable leather, stained yellow, is worn, which indoors is frequently laid aside, and males and females sit by the fire, leaving the upper part of the body naked. I bought a pair of women's Yakute boots of this leather.

TUNGUSE GIRLS IN WINTER COSTUME. *Page* 303.

They fit tight to the leg, and have at the top a flap of black velvet with red cloth trimming, which can be turned down and exposed for show in fair weather, or turned up, bringing the boots to the thighs. On each boot are two broad leather thongs, five or six feet long, to wind round the leg. Waterproof boots are here made, called by the Russians *torbasis*. These are cut from horse-hide, steeped in sour milk, then smoked, and finally rubbed well with fat and fine soot. They last exceedingly well, and are an inestimable comfort to the wearer, enabling him to tramp through snow, water, and mud without inconvenience.

The Yakute women are clever in making up fur garments. When visiting a Yakute family, I was looking about for a souvenir, and could at first see nothing to buy. In the room hung a curious cradle, very nearly resembling a coal-scuttle, which, when travelling, they suspend at the side of a reindeer; but this was too large for me to bring away. At length the materfamilias drew out a box in which she kept her treasures. Among these were some large pieces of fur, each consisting of an immense number of the small pieces of white skin that are found under the squirrel's neck. No piece was so large as the palm of the hand, and she had sewn them together with great industry. These I bought, much to the disgust of her daughter, for whom they were to have made a dandy garment. I purchased also of the old lady what I prized more, namely, an "*itti*," or large cap, coming down with flaps at the ears. The crown is made of the skins of sables' feet, and it has a border all round of the fur of sables' tails. The sight of this, since my return, has often excited the admiration of my lady friends.

The Yakutes who inhabit the inclement region adjacent to the Frozen Ocean have neither horses nor oxen, but breed large numbers of dogs, which draw them to and fro on their fishing excursions. Even those living on the 62nd parallel keep cattle under far greater difficulties than usual, for they have to make long journeys to collect hay, and do not always find enough. The cold prevents their breeding sheep, goats, or poultry. Nevertheless, cattle and hunting are their chief means of subsistence, for they do not in general cultivate the land, though in the gardens at Yakutsk are grown potatoes, cabbages, radishes, and turnips; gherkins, too, are reared in hot-beds.

Some products of Yakutsk industry are purchased by the Russians, particularly floor-cloths of white and coloured felts, which are cut in strips and sewed together like mosaic. From the earliest times they have been able to procure and work for themselves metals.*

The language of the Yakutes, which is largely spoken by the Russians who live among them, is one of the principal means by which we are led to assume their Turkish origin, for Latham says their speech is intelligible at Constantinople, and their traditions (for literature they have none) bespeak a southern origin.

* The iron ore of the Vilui was smelted by the Yakutes long before the advent of the Russians, and the other tribes got from them iron axes, awls, and tools for stripping and dressing hides. The Yakutes also make copper ornaments for clothes and harness, and the metal plates which they sew on their girdles. Even now, although they use European guns, they still make for themselves the great knife, or dagger, which is worn at the waist. The Yakutsk steel is more flexible than the Russian, and yet blades made of it will cut copper or pewter as easily as European blades.

Here are some Yakute words compared with Turkish :—

English.	Yakute.	Turk.	English.	Yakute.	Turk.
Yes	*Sittee*	Evet	One	*Bare*	Bir
No	*Socht*	Yokh	Two	*Akee*	Eekee
Well	*Outchigey*	Peky, Aee	Three	*Oose*	Ootch
Bad	*Thoosahane*	Fené	Four	*Terte*	Dort
Bread	*Astobitt*	Ek-mek	Five	*Baiss*	Besh
Water	*On*	Soo	Six	*Alta*	Altee
Beef	*Augauss*	Seyir	Seven	*Sett*	Yedee
Horse	*Att*	Att	Eight	*Agaouss*	Antuz
Road	*Coll*	Yol	Nine	*Togouss*	Tokuz
Man	*Kissi*	Kissi, Adami	Ten	*Owni*	On
Woman	*Jaiktorr*	Aorat	Eleven	*Onordoubis*	On-bir
Tree	*Marss*		Twelve	*Okorduchi*	On-eekee
Rain	*Samirr*	Yaghmoor	Twenty	*Surbia*	Igirme

Strahlenberg calls these people Pagans, but the latest writers call them Christians; and the method of their conversion was, it is said, extraordinary, for the Russian priests not making much headway against their superstitions, an ukase was one day issued setting forth that the good and loyal nation of the Yakutes were thought worthy to enter, and were consequently admitted into, the Russian Church, to become a part of the Tsar's Christian family, and entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his children. Such was the tenor of this strange proclamation, and success attended the measure. The new Christians showed perfect sincerity in the adoption of their novel faith, and the Russian priests have established their sway over the Yakute race, though amongst the outlying portion a lingering belief in Shamanism still survives, of which travellers from Yakutsk to Okhotsk have been made ware by their Yakute guides leaving them awhile in ggy weather, and stealing off into the forest to per- rm certain mysterious rites.

The distance from Yakutsk to Okhotsk is 800 miles

and the journey, whether undertaken in summer or winter, is one of the severest. The map gives one the idea that it might almost be accomplished by ascending the river Aldan and one of its affluents to the Stanovoi mountains. The usual plan, however, is to leave Yakutsk on horseback, with all the luggage on pack-saddles. Some estimate may be formed of the traffic once passing on this route from the fact that there were formerly employed in it from 20,000 to 30,000 horses. The postal service is still continued between Irkutsk and the Sea of Okhotsk; but there is no telegraph; hence the fact of Professor Nordenskjold having been frozen in the ice on the north-east coast of Siberia was brought a long way by courier before it could be made known by telegram to Europe.

One of the difficulties of the winter journey is the insufficient sleeping accommodation on the route. The houses, when they exist, are very bad, and when they fail, travellers sleep in a tent, or else upon furs and wraps in the open air. They usually lie, however, by a roaring fire, and so roast on one side whilst they freeze on the other—changing their position when need requires.

After proceeding for some distance the traveller has to exchange his horse for a novel kind of steed—a reindeer, on which the mere gaining of one's seat, to say nothing of keeping it, is by no means so easy as might be supposed.* Having gained his reindeer

* To get on the animal's *back*, as one would mount a donkey, would probably cripple the deer for life. The saddle is therefore placed on its shoulder close to the neck, and to mount, the rider, holding the bridle, stands at the right side of the animal, with his face turned forwards. He then raises his left foot to the saddle, which he never touches with his hands, and springing with the right leg, and aided also by a pole, which

seat, the English traveller may keep it—if he can. He will most likely fall off half-a-dozen times in the first quarter of an hour, until he discovers that he must poise himself in such a manner that his body may continually, and with ease, lend itself to a swinging motion.* There is a second lesson to be learned by the uninitiated, which is usually imparted in a very impressive manner; for should the cavalier attempt to hold with the knees, and the cushion consequently slip back, the moment the weight is felt on the animal's back, he bends under his haunches and lets the rider slip to the ground, and that perhaps in ice, snow, or a pool of water.

As the traveller approaches Okhotsk he has again to change his mode of conveyance, to be drawn this time by dogs. All three methods of travel have their delights on this lonely journey, the tedium of which is sometimes relieved by an extemporary hunting scene.†

he holds in his right hand, he gains his seat. The native girls and women are as expert in this jumping as the men, and rarely want assistance in mounting.

* The practised reindeer riders acquire the habit of striking gently with the heel, alternately right and left, at every step, just behind the animal's shoulders. This is done, not for the purpose of stimulating the deer, but because the motion described is the surest means of maintaining equilibrium. The staff, too, with which the rider mounts is carried in his hand, and is used for maintaining an equipoise in riding; but any attempt of the rider, in the first critical moment, to support himself by resting the staff on the ground, is sure to end in his being unseated.

† Mr. Erman describes the killing, during his journey, of a wild sheep, and the joy of the Yakutes at the prospect of getting fresh meat for supper. One of them cried out characteristically, "I will stay awake the whole night, and eat till we set out." Whilst the carcase was being prepared, every one cut for himself some thin wooden skewers, on which he spitted a row of little bits of meat. These were only appetizers, to be followed by large pieces boiled in the pot. The hunter, however, who had killed the sheep claimed as his perquisite the animal's head; the brains, as a

The difficulties of the summer journey are somewhat different in character. A large part of the way lies over swampy ground, on which the causeways are not kept in repair, and where the horses flounder in mud and water, into which they occasionally pitch the rider. It is no uncommon thing for horses to die under the fatigues of the way. The Yakutes, moreover, have a cruel fashion of giving their horses little food whilst journeying. A similar custom obtains farther east, among the Gilyaks, where I found that, though they gave a dog two pieces of fish daily when at home, yet, when travelling, they gave him only one, because the dogs immediately after eating are always lazy and feeble.*

These, then, are some of the difficulties of the old route, from Irkutsk to the Pacific, which happily it did not fall to my lot to be obliged to encounter; but I crossed the Baikal instead, and, after making a *détour* to the Chinese frontier, continued across the Buriat steppe to the Amur.

special delicacy, he sucked out raw, and cut out the eyes to be dressed for his own exclusive benefit.

* It does not appear that the Yakutes are otherwise cruel to their horses, for Erman relates that, on going up to a horse that had carried him many miles, to pat his neck by way of saying adieu, the Yakutes came up and embraced the other horses, putting their arms round their necks and hugging them like children. Mr. Hill, too, discovered in a very practical way the regard of the Yakutes for their horses, when, food having run short, and after a dinner of only cranberries and nuts, he proposed that one of the animals should be killed and eaten, the Yakutes replied that they never killed one of their horses until they had passed five whole days together without any sort of food. It would be a shame, they said, that while they had tea and a morsel of sugar, and the prospect before them of getting other food, one of the poor creatures should be slain. Mr. Hill, therefore, and his merchant friend had to take their guns and hunt for game, with a keenness which they had never known before.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ACROSS LAKE BAIKAL TO TROITZKOSAVSK.

Leaving Irkutsk.—The Angara.—Approach to the Baikal.—Its shores and fish. — Steaming across. — Seizing post-horses. — Arrival at Verchne Udinsk.—Smuggling at the prison.—Arrival at Selenginsk.—English mission to Buriats.—English graves.—Old scholars.—Story of the mission.—Journey to Troitzkosavsk.

WE left Irkutsk on Thursday, July 10th, after a stay that could hardly be called enjoyable, though amid the confusion we met with much more consideration than could have been expected. For the first night we slept, as already stated, in our tarantass, and I took my morning bath in the pantry. What a treat, too, was that bath, deliciously cold from the Angara, to a man who had not taken his clothes off for more than a week! During our stay we made the acquaintance of several officers, of whom there is no lack at Irkutsk, as there are usually in barracks about 2,000 troops. It was very difficult to procure provisions. On sending out on the morning of our departure, all the white bread that could be found was one penny loaf, and that somewhat stale. It seemed, therefore, that I should have to come down to rye bread; but some pancakes were made for me, the difficulty was thus surmounted, and by two o'clock we had fairly begun our 300 miles to Kiakhta. Our baggage and remaining books were still too heavy to

be taken on the same vehicle, and we therefore stowed away ourselves and our personal effects in the tarantass, and the boxes followed in a post-conveyance, out of which they were changed at every station. We wished to make only 40 miles before night, to Lake Baikal, and then wait till morning at Listvenitznaya for the steamer.

We had not proceeded far before we drove along the banks of the Angara, which is, in some respects, the most remarkable river in Siberia. There are scores of streams and rivulets running into Lake Baikal, of which the more important are the Upper Angara, the Barguzin, and the Selenga; but the Angara is the only one that runs out, and it does so with such impetuosity that the rapid by which the water leaves the lake never freezes even with the temperature of the air at 24° below zero; and though the ice is six feet thick on the lake, yet, all the winter through, ducks float on the bosom of the rapid. I have heard it suggested that there may be hot-springs just there; but whether this is so or not, the waters of the lake and the Angara are particularly cold.*

Shortly after leaving Irkutsk the road enters a wooded part of the Angara valley, and as the road winds along it, many points are passed presenting magnificent views. In some parts enormous sand-

* As we approached Telma my thermometer at noon in the shade stood at 85°, and when crossing a stream called the Ija, the temperature of the water was 70°; but coming on the same day to the Angara, nearly 100 miles from Baikal, the temperature of the river was only 50°; and when crossing the Baikal itself, the atmosphere registered 45° and the water only 40°. The Angara is the last river in Siberia to close, which it does about New Year's Day (sometimes not till the middle of January); and the first to open, namely, about the 11th April. The lake is 1,200 feet above the sea level, and the current of the river is remarkably swift, as

stone cliffs arise out of the water, crowned with dark pines and cedars; in others the thick forest descends to the river's brink, and the broad sheet of water is seen rushing madly onwards. Afterwards the valley becomes more rugged, with deep ravines running up into the mountains. Beyond this the road has been cut along the edge of a cliff at a considerable height above the river, and, about five miles before reaching the Baikal, a scene is presented that may well cause the traveller to stop. The valley becomes wider, and the mountains rise abruptly to a much greater elevation. The Angara is here more than a mile in width, and this great body of water is seen rolling down a steep incline, forming a rapid nearly four miles in length. At the head of this, and in the centre of the stream, a great mass of rock rises, called the *Shaman Kamen*, or "Priest," or "spirit's stone," held sacred by the followers of Shamanism, and not to be passed by them without an act of devotion. When Shamanism prevailed in this neighbourhood, human sacrifices were made at the sacred rock, the victim with his hands tied being tossed into the torrent below. Beyond is the broad expanse of the Baikal, extending about 50 miles, to where its waves wash the foot of Amar Daban, whose summit, even in June, is usually covered with snow. The mighty torrent throwing up its jets of spray, the rugged rocks with their fringes of

the traveller will infer should he overtake a barge being towed against the stream by perhaps 20 horses. Though the distance is only 40 miles from Irkutsk, a barge takes three days to be dragged up to the rapid, and then for the rapid itself it requires another day, even with double the number of horses. This refers, however, to a large *soudno*, or vessel, with a bluff bow and broad stern, which might almost as well sail sideways as speed ahead, and usually carries 600 chests and 25,000 bricks of tea.

pendent birch overtopped by lofty pines, and the colouring on the mountains, produce a picture of extraordinary beauty and grandeur. A few miles further, and the Baikal is seen spreading out like a sea, and its waves are heard beating on the rocky shore.

The storms on the lake are very severe. They say, at Irkutsk, it is only upon the Baikal in the autumn that a man learns to pray from his heart. The most dangerous wind is the north-west. It is called the mountain wind, whilst that from the south-west is called the "*deep* sea-breeze." Formerly, in crossing, it was no uncommon occurrence for a boat or barge to be detained three weeks on a voyage of 40 miles, without being able to land on either shore. This induced an enterprising merchant to have a hull built on the lake, and engines, boiler, and machinery brought 4,000 miles overland from Petersburg; and when the new vessel steamed across in a gale, both Siberians and Mongols looked on with not a little astonishment.*

The fish of the Baikal are abundant, and are caught in variety, such as the *omullé*, somewhat like the herring; the *suig*, which resembles but is smaller than the sturgeon; the *askina*, the pike, the carp, the *lavaret*, and a white fish called the *tymain*. Travellers

* The basin of the lake is about 400 miles in length and 35 miles in width, covering an area of 14,000 square miles. It has a circumference of nearly 1,200 miles. This, therefore, is the *largest fresh-water lake* in the Old World; and, next to the Caspian and the Aral, is the largest inland sheet of water in Asia. Several travellers have crossed the lake *en route* from or to Irkutsk, but Mr. Atkinson did more. He spent several days exploring its coasts, and, turning to the east from Listvenitznaya, he found the shore became exceedingly abrupt for 20 miles, with many striking scenes, in which waterfalls played a part. The north shore is the most lofty. In some parts the precipices rise 900 feet, and, a little beyond the Arga, to 1,200 feet. Basaltic cliffs also appear rising from

also tell of a remarkable fish called the *golomain*, which is only seen when thrown on shore during a violent tempest, and is of so oily a nature that it melts in the sun, or on the approach of heat, leaving only its skeleton and skin. It is a remarkable fact also that the seal of the ocean is found in the lake. About 2,000 are killed yearly.

The natives call the lake *Svyatoe More*, the "Holy Sea," and aver that no one was ever lost in its waters; for when a person is drowned therein, the waves invariably throw his body on shore. It must be a pleasant sensation to cross this lake in winter. The ice is as clear, transparent, and as smooth as glass, so that travellers describe the difficulty of realizing that they are not gliding on water. The journey across is made in a remarkably short time. Mr. Erman travelled thus 7 German miles (or 27 English) in 2¼ hours, which for horse travelling must be allowed to be extraordinary. Formerly there was a winter station on the ice, half-way across, for changing horses; but as the ice on one occasion gave way, and allowed the whole concern to disappear, they now cross the lake at a single stage. There is a road round the south end of the lake, but in summer the crossing by steamer is usually preferred.

deep water to an elevation of 700 feet. A little more than a boat's length from shore, soundings have been taken to the depth of 900 feet. Greater depths than this, however, have been reached. The captain of the steamer informed Mr. Atkinson that on one occasion he had run out 2,100 feet of line without finding bottom; and in 1872 soundings were taken at the south-west end, showing 3,600 feet: hence the common saying that the Baikal has no bottom. The shore exhibits, besides the basalt just named, other unquestionable evidences of volcanic action, and in some of the ravines are great masses of lava. Hot mineral springs likewise exist in several parts of the surrounding mountain-chain.

We reached the station about six or eight hours after leaving Irkutsk, and, passing the night at a rough hotel, next morning got our tarantass on board, among half-a-dozen others, and steamed across. The steamer was called the *General Korsakoff*. It made a loud grunting, and out of its tall chimney emitted a cloud of sparks like the tail of a comet. I went below to see the engines, and found them of the most primitive kind—a huge boiler simply laid in a wooden hull. I offered for sale on board some of my books, and gave others away. This soon got me friends, and the engineer honoured me by playing a tune on his concertina. I went also into the captain's cabin, and he was glad to buy some New Testaments. It was so chilly, however, on deck that I put on my ulster, and stowed myself away in the tarantass; after doing which, on the 11th of July, it was not difficult to believe what I had heard, that pigeons flying across the lake in winter sometimes drop dead from cold.

As we drew near to the shore, we had the enjoyment of a mild piece of something like revenge. I have already observed that the traveller who has a crown podorojna takes precedence; but if two travellers come to a station, *both* having crown podorojnas, he who arrives first takes the horses. Moreover, "the rule of the road" is that one set of post-horses must not outstrip one that has started before; which rule, however, an extra tip to the yemstchik will sometimes evade. Now, as we came towards Irkutsk, we had been outstripped by a military officer travelling with his wife, who took the fresh horses we should have had; so that, when we arrived, it was feared we should be without. Whereupon the officer's wife, addressing

me in French, asked half-triumphantly, and half in a mischievous joke, whether I did not find myself "without horses"? She happened, however, to be wrong. We obtained horses, and, at night, overtook our friends, broken down, with their tarantass undergoing repairs at another station. We therefore got ahead, till, on the Baikal, they overtook us again. We saw at a glance that there would be a rush for horses, and, therefore, immediately the boat touched, I sprang ashore, presented to the post-master my podorojna, and secured my team; whereas the officer, not knowing that I had more than an ordinary civilian's paper, or relying, perhaps, upon the power of his crown podorojna, was not so quick, and failed to get his steeds; and as we rolled away we heard him storming at the post-master for allowing us to have them before he had been served.

We drove for some distance on an elevated plateau beside the eastern shore of the lake, from which we got many good views of its waters, and where we observed at the roadside red Turk's-head lilies, similar to but smaller than those seen in English gardens, and yellow lilies. There were likewise in the neighbourhood abundance of strawberries, raspberries, and whortleberries. Among the trees were cedars up to 120 feet in height; also the balsam poplar, which here attains a growth sufficiently large to allow the natives of the coast to make their canoes of a single log; likewise the cherry-tree and the Siberian apple. A black and white jackdaw, as my companion called it, made its appearance; and the birds of prey appeared more numerous, as they well might be in the vicinity of a larger animal population; for in these Baikal forests are found martens,

squirrels, foxes, wolves, the lynx, the elk, the wild boar, and the bear—the last feeding on berries in summer, and on cedar-nuts raked up from beneath the snow in winter.

Having taken the lead on the road from the Baikal, we were anxious to keep it, though things looked threatening on arriving at the first station, where the post-master said there were no horses. We brought our crown podorojna to bear, and then the letter of the Minister at Petersburg, but to no purpose. There were no post-horses, he said, though there was a man standing near who would lend us private horses at double fares. To this we should have had to agree, but we pulled out lastly our *blanco* letter, and this gained the day; for the post-master, on seeing that, said to the would-be extortioner, "You must let them have the horses"; and so on we trotted through a country more hilly than anything we had passed, till at six o'clock we arrived at Verchne Udinsk. This place might very well be called "the Amur and China Junction," for to turn to the left brings the traveller to the Pacific, and to turn to the right leads to Peking.

It was now Saturday afternoon, and we were anxious to get on, if possible, a few stations further, to Selenginsk, which was the scene of the labours of some English missionaries, and there to spend the Sunday to inquire about their work. The old difficulty of horses, however, cropped up, for they could let us have none on the instant, and every one was on tiptoe expecting the passing through of the Governor-General, Baron Friedrichs. I have already mentioned that his Excellency was at some mineral springs on the Mongolian frontier, and, having heard of the fire at Irkutsk, he

was now returning. Everything, therefore, had to be in readiness. The post-house was swept and garnished, and we were requested not to go into the large guest-room, where the tables and chairs were arranged for his Excellency's visit. Horses, however, were promised quickly as a favour, and meanwhile we strolled into the town.

Verchne—that is, Upper—Udinsk is the capital of an uyezd, and has a population of 3,500. It is a clean little town, and, upon entering the market square, it was easy to see that we were approaching the borders of the Celestial Empire—for here was John Chinaman, with open shop, standing behind the counter selling tea. We found also, to our great satisfaction, a baker's shop, where was not only white bread, but all manner of bake-meats, of which we proceeded to make havoc then and there. The white bread was 75 per cent. dearer than at Tobolsk, but I was only too thankful to get a store at any price, my pancakes being all but gone. For lemonade they asked 6*s.* a bottle, or 6*d.* a glass. It was like watered lemon syrup. Fresh butter cost a rouble a pound, and was obtained with difficulty.

There is a prison in Verchne Udinsk, which we passed at the side of the road, and the prisoners were looking from the windows. Here had recently occurred an incident illustrative of Goryantchikoff's statement, in his "Buried Alive," that some of his fellow-prisoners were spirit-dealers, and frequently smuggled liquor into the prison in the entrails of cows or oxen. For this purpose the entrails were washed and filled with water, to keep them damp and ready to receive the liquor. When filled, they were wound by the smuggler round his body and thighs, and so brought into the prison.

On the afternoon of our arrival, a drunken woman had been detected thus carrying in *vodka*. We did not visit the building, but left with the Ispravnik half-a-dozen New Testaments, and the same number of Gospels for Tatars, and of Scripture portions in Mongolian. The present was not unappreciated, for the Ispravnik, learning that I was going to the far east, gave me an introduction to his son-in-law at Blagovestchensk, which afterwards proved useful.

At last we started, and trotted on through the night to Selenginsk, and spent there the remainder of the following day. We called on the Ispravnik, who, with his wife, received us politely; and the latter, finding that we had good books to dispose of, wished to purchase some, which I allowed her to do to the value of three roubles. We also asked the Ispravnik's acceptance of some portions of Scripture in Mongolian for distribution among the surrounding Buriats. Then conversation followed about the English mission, of which Selenginsk was for 13 years the head-quarters, but ceased to be so about 40 years ago.

The Ispravnik had nothing to say of the missionaries but what was good and kind,—a repetition of what I had heard elsewhere. A house, he told us, was still standing on the spot where the missionaries lived, and he furnished us with the names of persons who could give us further information. We went, therefore, direct to the site of the mission station, where we found some out-buildings, very much like those of an English farmyard, and strongly suggestive of home. There was also a nice house, which had been built near the spot on which formerly stood the one inhabited by the Englishmen. The garden remained, and in it

we were taken to a walled enclosure—a little grave-yard—in which were five graves: those of Mrs. Yule, Mrs. Stallybrass, and three children. The place had been recently renovated, at the expense of a missionary in China, and we were pleased to see the resting-place of our compatriots looking so neat and orderly. The garden commanded a pretty view of the valley of the Selenga, and there was pointed out across the river the site on which the town stood in the early part of the century, till, being destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt on the opposite side. The lady who occupied the house told us that now and then a traveller turns aside to see the spot, and that the ignorant people say that the English people come out of their graves at night—a report she is at no pains to contradict, on the plea that, as the house is in a lonely position, the idea may conduce to protect her from thieves.

After having been shown what there was of interest about the place, we called on an old man—a Russian—named Ivlampi Melnikoff, who, in his boyhood, had attended the mission school. When he heard that one of the missionaries, Mr. Stallybrass, was still living, and that I had seen him just before leaving England, he seemed much pleased, and spoke with affection of his teachers. He had not opened a book for 40 years, and so had forgotten how to read, but he remembered, and inquired particularly for, some of the missionaries' sons, and sent to them his respects. The old man had lost sight of his Buriat schoolfellows, and thought that not one of them became a Christian, though he afterwards remembered that one was baptized into the Russian Church. Besides this old Russian we saw the nephew of one who had been a pupil in the

school, and heard of an old man living some 35 versts distant, still a Buriat, who, as a boy, had been a scholar. We had the same testimony from both witnesses, that has been repeated by several travellers, that the missionaries did not baptize a single convert. None of them, however, said what I did not know until I returned to England, and spoke to Mr. Stallybrass upon the subject, namely, that the missionaries were under agreement with the Russian Government *not* to baptize any converts.*

We continued our journey from Selenginsk for twelve hours more, through a country which gave me my first

* The story of the mission seemed to be this:—At the beginning of the present century there were four parties of foreign Protestant missionaries working in the Russian dominions, namely, (1) the Presbyterians, in the south of European Russia; (2) the Moravians, on the Volga; (3) some Swiss missionaries from Basle, who took the place of the Presbyterians, and worked upon their ground; and (4) the London Missionary Society, which was allowed to send men to the Buriats in Siberia. Among the last company were Messrs. Stallybrass, Swan, and Yule, who saw at once that the first thing to be done was to translate the Scriptures. Mr. Stallybrass left England in 1817, and lived in Irkutsk for a year and a half to learn the Mongolian language. In due time the translation was commenced, from the original Hebrew and Greek, and with such success did the work go on that they actually printed the Old Testament in their Siberian wilderness at Verchne Udinsk, to which place the missionaries removed from Selenginsk, and where they remained till they were sent home in 1840. The New Testament was printed in London. Their work was, therefore, of a preparatory and fundamental, rather than an aggressive, character. Nevertheless, they had a school, numbering, sometimes, from 15 to 20 scholars; but there was found a special difficulty in inducing children to attend, for not only were their parents utterly ignorant of the value of education, but they wanted the children to help them tend their flocks, grazing, not on settled pasturage, but as they wandered over the vast extent of the Trans-Baikal and the Mongolian steppes. Hence the children were at school to-day and gone to-morrow; and even when parents could be induced to leave their children with the missionaries during their own absence with their flocks, these children had to be kept and fed as boarders, and even then the parents begrudged the loss of their services. The object, however, of the Englishmen began to be appreciated, and tokens of success appeared. Then came the difficulty

experience of a Russian steppe, a tract of undulating land with a sandy soil, covered with a little grass and a reedy-looking herb, but suffering from a lack of humidity, as the tundra suffers from lack of warmth. Trees were visible only here and there, but water was abundant, sometimes in large lakes; so that the hilly roads, the expanse of water, and the treeless waste, reminded me sometimes of the scenery of our Wiltshire downs, and, in one or two places, of the English lakes. As we approached our destination the road became more and more sandy, and very heavy for the horses; but at last, on Monday, the 14th July, we reached Kiakhta.

which all along had loomed in the distance. The Russian Synod, in its jealousy for its own Church, had expressly stipulated that the missionaries should receive no converts by baptism, and this had been agreed to, and, of course, kept. But when certain of the Buriats showed signs of having received the truth, in the love of it, the missionaries found themselves in a dilemma. The Russians wished the converts to be handed over for baptism to their Church, and, on these terms, were willing that the English should stay and work as hard as they pleased; but this did not satisfy the men, nor the committee of the London Missionary Society, and neither party was disposed to give way. About this time, however, great political changes had taken place. Alexander I., who favoured Christian missions, had died, and was succeeded by the iron Nicolas, who does not seem to have been particularly opposed to missions; but the Synod was jealous of foreign interference, and an occasion was found for dismissing all foreign missionaries from the Russian dominions, under the pretext that the Synod wished to do all its own mission work for its own heathen. The Imperial ukase to this effect was issued in 1840, and thus a mission was stopped whose foundations were laid by the English, and which produced a translation of the whole Bible printed in Buriat Mongolian. It had taught some few scholars of great promise, one of whom, at least, named Shagder, it was known (and probably many more did so unknown), was afterwards baptized into the Russian Church. How far the Russian missionaries among this people owe any portion of their success to the foundation thus laid I cannot say. Of the Russian mission I shall speak hereafter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SIBERIAN FRONTIER AT KIAKHTA.

Hospitable reception.—History of Kiakhta.—Treaties between Russians and Chinese.—Early trading.—Decline of commerce.—The tea trade.—Troitzkosavsk church.—Miraculous ikons.—Kiakhta church.—Russian churches in general.—Bells.—Valuable ikons.—Climate of Kiakhta.—Drive to Ust-Keran.

I HAVE said in the previous chapter that we reached Kiakhta. It would have been more accurate to have said Troitzkosavsk, which is within sight of and may be called a suburb of Kiakhta, situated on the Siberian frontier. Here we were lodged, for by the terms of a treaty between Chinese and Russians, no officer or stranger may sleep in Kiakhta proper. On arriving, we learned, to our dismay, that there was no hotel or guest-house in either town. We therefore went to the office of the Ispravnik, and in his absence showed our documents, which served so far to establish our respectability, that we were told we might have accommodation at the police-station. For this offer of course we were grateful, but, before accepting it, we thought we would present some of our letters of introduction. One was addressed to Mr. Tokmakoff, a first-class merchant in the place; but he was away in Mongolia, and his wife and family were living at their summer house "in the country." We had another letter, given me by Mr. Larsen, the telegraphist at Irkutsk, to Mr.

Koecher, the principal of the *real* or commercial school, who lived in one of the best houses of the town, and who, upon our presenting the letter, immediately pressed us to take up our abode with him. We were only too thankful to do so, and, after a fortnight's inconveniences in sleeping, to find ourselves in quarters with proper and comfortable beds. Our host was living bachelor fashion, and was expecting to leave shortly for Petersburg; his wife had already preceded him. He spared no pains to make us comfortable, and, being thus settled, we had time to look about the place, which, on leaving England, had been the utmost bound to which my travelling imagination had carried me. The Mohammedans say, "See Mecca and expire"; the Italians, "See Naples and die"; and in somewhat of the same spirit I had fixed upon Kiakhta as the *ultima thule* of my Siberian wanderings: not that there is much that is remarkable in the physical aspect of the place, but from Kiakhta one walks out of Siberia into China and sees the blue hills of Mongolia. The town, moreover, has a history, and was the scene of a treaty between the two largest empires in the world.

So far back as the 17th century, trade was carried on, though not protected by Government, between the Siberians and their southern neighbours the Chinese.*

* In 1655 a Russian embassy was sent to Peking, with a view to the arrangement of a commercial treaty. The route then lay from Tobolsk up the Irtish to its source, over the Altai mountains, through the vast domain of the Kalmuks, and across the Mongolian steppes. The Russian envoy, however, refused to lie down and submit to Chinese etiquette in approaching the Emperor, and was sent away, partly, perhaps, for his want of obsequiousness, and more, perhaps, because the Chinese did not see the need of a treaty, the boundaries of the two empires being then not so perfectly in contact as now. A second embassy, sent in 1675, proved also a failure; but after this there happened a series of events which caused the Chinese to realize that the Russians were nearer neighbours

But in 1692 a treaty was made at Nertchinsk, opening the way to regular and permanent commerce between the two countries, though subject to certain vexatious forms and restrictions. Subsequently Peter the Great, seeing the advantage of this treaty, desired that the privilege of trading with China, then confined to individuals, should be extended to caravans; and the Emperor approving, the right of trading thus was appropriated as a monopoly by the Russian Crown.

So things went on till 1722, when, the Russians offending their celestial neighbours, the Chinese Emperor expelled all Muscovites from his dominions, and brought trading affairs to a standstill. Six years later the treaty of Kiakhta was concluded, which stipulated that a caravan of not more than 200 persons should visit Peking every three years, and that the subjects of each nation, though not allowed to cross the frontier with their wares, might dispose of them to each other at two places on the border—Kiakhta, and Tsurukhaitu on the Argun, about 60 miles from Nertchinsk. This led to the foundation of the town of Kiakhta; and as there were certain conditions in the treaty limiting the number of persons, and imposing various restrictions upon those who should live there, another town was built a mile off, and called Troitzkosavsk, in which these restrictions were evaded.*

than they had been accustomed to regard them. This was brought about by the advances of the Siberians in the region of the Amur, where they had taken up their abode among the Daurians and other tribes, whom they so far encroached upon as to cause the Daurians to appeal for aid to the Chinese. This aid was given, and thus the Chinese and the Russians came first to blows in 1684.

* Kiakhta became the centre of Russo-Chinese commerce, which was greatly increased after 1762, when Catherine II. abolished the Crown monopoly of the fur trade, together with the exclusive privilege of sending

The traveller of to-day does not see Kiakhta as it was in palmy times, though a considerable trade is still carried on between China and Eastern Siberia, and large consignments are sent to Nijni Novgorod and Moscow. The tradition is still kept up that the sea passage injures the flavour of the herb, and that caravan tea is the best, which commands, accordingly, prices up to ten shillings per pound. I have heard quite recently of "yellow" tea, which even at Kiakhta costs this sum, and which, brought overland, would probably command in Petersburg 16*s.* or 18*s.* per pound. One hears also in Russia of "blossom" tea, which consists of only the dried flowers of the tea plant, and of other choice growths, the best of which are not brought to England at all. There is one kind of yellow tea, I am told, costing as much as five guineas a pound. The Emperor of China is supposed to enjoy its monopoly. A friend of mine, who received a few pounds as a present, tells me she did not think it distinguishable from that sold at 5*s.* a pound. Blossom tea is well known throughout Russia, and is mixed in the proportion of two ounces to one pound of ordinary tea.*

caravans to Peking. These concessions increased the traffic enormously, and the influence of the business transacted on the frontier extended from Kiakhta all across Siberia and Russia, and even to the middle of Germany. Thus, from 1728 to 1860, the Kiakhta merchants enjoyed almost a monopoly of Chinese trade, and made fortunes estimated by millions of roubles. The treaty of 1860, however, opened Chinese ports to Russian ships, and thus dealt a severe blow to the Kiakhta trade; for up to that time only a single cargo of tea was carried annually into Russia by water. Before 1860, the importation of tea at Kiakhta was about one million chests annually, without taking any account of brick tea, and, previous to 1850, all trade done at Kiakhta was in barter, tea being exchanged for Russian furs and other goods, because the Russian Government prohibited the export of gold and silver money.

* When crossing the Pacific I fell in with a tea merchant homeward

In addition to ordinary and superior sorts, the Russians import, chiefly for consumption by the military and native populations, immense quantities of tea pressed into the form of tablets, or bricks, each of which weighs about 2 lbs. These bricks are made of tea-dust mixed with a common coarse sort made of twigs, stalks, and tea refuse, the whole being first submitted for a minute to the action of steam and then pressed into a mould. Some say that bullocks' or other blood is also mixed with brick tea, but I have not heard this corroborated. The tea-dust used for brick tea costs in China about 5*d.* per pound, the manufacture about 1½*d.* more, and the article bears a handsome profit. In 1878 the Russian manufacturers in China were said to have realized a profit of 75 per cent. This they cannot do, however, all the year round, for the making of the bricks goes on only from the middle of June to the end of September, during which season they work at it night and day.

Apart, however, from the trade which passes over the Siberian frontier, there is much in Kiakhta and Troitzkosavsk to interest the western traveller. Among other novelties are to be seen Mongolian cavalry dashing about the streets, the soldiers being known mainly by a piece of ribbon streaming from their hats. The united population of the two places amounts to nearly

bound from China, and from him I gathered that three-fourths of the Russian trade is done in medium and common teas, such as are sold in London in bond from 1*s.* 2*d.* down to 8*d.* per English pound, exclusive of the home duty. The remaining fourth of their trade includes some of the very best teas grown in the Ning Chow districts—teas which the Russians will have at any price, and for which, in a bad year, they may have to pay as much as 3*s.* a pound in China, though in ordinary years they cost from 2*s.* upwards. The flowery Pekoe, or blossom tea, costs also about 3*s.* in China.

5,000, who are supplied with provisions by both Russians and Chinese. There may be seen coming from their farms and gardens numbers of peasant wagons, as well as clumsy Mongolian carts, the latter on wheels without spokes, formed of large wooden discs, which oxen cause to wabble along. Common vegetables are to be had in abundance. A large square in the centre of Troitzkosavsk is used for a corn and hay market, and is provided in Russian fashion with a huge pair of scales sanctioned by the authorities. Here the vendors of agricultural and garden produce assemble, and generally manage to get rid of their stock and garden produce early in the day. Young chickens cost 4*d.* each, lemons in winter 1*s.* a-piece, and occasionally even double that price, and Cognac brandy 9*s.* per bottle. Troitzkosavsk is also supplied with excellent fish, but we found it difficult to get good fruit. Besides the market square at Troitzkosavsk, there are two public gardens at Kiakhta, and also a cemetery.

We went to the small prison, and found it a poor affair. The police-master told us he had received a letter concerning our intended visit long before, and had been expecting us. Where the information came from he did not say; but it served to remind us again that, though more than 4,000 miles from the capital, we were not lost sight of. This was the last place at which I heard of our coming having been announced beforehand, though a general at Petersburg had told me that I might usually expect this; for how, said he, are the Governors to whom your letter is addressed to know that your document is not forged unless they are advised that a letter has been given

you? and then, to illustrate his remark, he said that, on one occasion, a man, dressed like a gendarme, presented himself at Irkutsk with a forged letter and got a prisoner released.

I may add to the foregoing that Kiakhta was the last, and almost the only, place other than Petersburg where symptoms of a disaffected or revolutionary spirit came under my notice; and this in the solitary instance, that when an educated man in the town was shown in an English newspaper a portrait of Vera Sassulitch, the would-be murderess of Trepoff, I heard that he admired and praised her. As for Nihilism, I heard, in crossing Russia, so little about it that I am ashamed to say I left the country with very vague ideas as to what it is. I am not sure that I know much about it now, but an Englishman who has spent a large portion of his life in Russia and Siberia tells me there are various kinds of Nihilists. The mildest type, if they can be called such, simply want free speech and a free press, as do, I am told, all the "Slavophils"; the next wish for a ministry responsible to the people; but both these classes (which are supposed to be numerous) think the time not yet come, and that they must wait for further enlightenment of the people. With this opinion my friend agreed, feeling sure that at present the educated Russian and the moujik would quarrel, he said, if one were dependent on the other. The third class are the "black" Nihilists, who want the dethronement of the reigning dynasty and a republic, and who are willing to adopt any means, even the most criminal, to gain their end.

Of all this and its like I heard next to nothing after leaving Petersburg; there, however, great excitement

prevailed. I arrived only a few days after one of the attempts on the late Emperor's life, and a friend called to tell me they were at their wits' end to know what to do. Turning back his coat collar, he showed me sewn thereon the certified badge of his calling, so placed that it might be ready to show the police, if required, at a moment's notice. The English, he said, were strongly suspected, and he doubted whether he should be safe in affording me his usual protection and kindly services. He had told one of his Russian friends that I had arrived in the country for the purpose of distributing books and tracts, but the Russian did not believe that I could be come for such a charitable object, but thought I must be sent by the English Government. The rumours afloat respecting the English were both numerous and ridiculous. The authorities had not then succeeded in finding the press from which were issued the Nihilist placards and papers, and, as the ambassadors' residences are privileged places, supposed to be closed against the police, it was affirmed that the secret press must be there. My friend told me he heard it said that "proclamations" against the Russian Government could be bought at the English Embassy for a rouble each. Another rumour said that the Russians were persuaded that the centre of the revolution was in the English Embassy, and that they had even thought of setting fire thereto, with the hope of securing, in the confusion, the revolutionary papers. I smiled on hearing this, and concluded that it could be only the most ignorant of the people who believed such puerilities; but on repeating it as a joke to a Russian fellow-traveller from Moscow, he said he quite believed that

the forbidden press was in the Ambassador's house, and that the revolutionists obtained their money from the English Government. I heard, too, in Petersburg that it was thought by the lower orders that the Nihilists obtained a large portion of their funds from the "International" in England.

All this smoke and rumour, however, we left behind on quitting Moscow, and though we may perchance have been watched, I was never conscious of it. I mention this because as some were surprised at my going to Russia when in such a disturbed condition, so others may be curious to know how this disturbance affected me as a traveller; and though I am far from supposing that my very limited and isolated experience is worth much, or perhaps anything, in showing the political condition of Russia and Siberia at the time of my visit, yet I wish to convey the impression that Russian atrocities and inflamed horrors, as posted on placards and shouted by London newsboys, shrink into very much smaller dimensions when the scene of action is reached. Such at least has been my invariable experience, and to this I shall further allude hereafter.

They have also at Troitzkosavsk a church in which "a miracle" seemed about to be recognised during our sojourn; for, on the first night of our stay, after I had gone to bed, a woman came to the party of friends with whom I had left Mr. Interpreter, and told them that she could see a strange halo of light in the church, but whether caused by celestial radiance or angels' wings she did not say. The party turned out, therefore, my interpreter included, and made for the church, into which they could not gain admittance.

and which was apparently empty, though they managed at last, by looking through a crevice or window, to descry a lamp burning before a glass ikon, which happened to slant at such an angle as dimly to reflect through the darkness the rays of light to the spot where they had been seen by the woman. This took away the sense of the miraculous, not altogether to the satisfaction of some of the party, who seemed to think "there was something in it." *

* In Russia one continually meets with these sacred pictures, said to work miracles: and sometimes *relics*, though the latter not so often as in Roman countries. In two places I have been curious enough to inquire for the evidence that might be given to substantiate the so-called miracles. Of course, in many cases, the wonderful things said to have been performed are enveloped in the mist of antiquity, but one explanation offered at Novgorod, in the Yuryef monastery, was to the effect that the very man who had shown us the bells, many years ago, saw two women arrive at the place, who were screaming and possessed of the devil, but that on coming to the grave of Father Fochi (the great saint of the place) they were made whole. The second explanation offered me, at the Spasski monastery in Yaroslaf, was of a similar character. A certain ikon, before which I was standing, was alleged to have been placed in the church in 1828. A girl, 17 years of age, was seized by demoniacal possession, and dreamed that she saw a certain picture. On waking, she was said to have searched through the town for the picture, which, on looking through the church window, she recognized in the ikon before us, and from that day she was made whole! Such are some of the stories upon which rest the alleged power of ikons to work miracles. But, as I have said before, the Russians are by no means "sceptical." Consequently, if a church or a monastery only possesses a well-known miracle-working ikon, the fortune of the place is made. Persons come from far and near to pray before it, bringing, of course, a present, and not unfrequently adding a thank-offering if the prayer be heard. A poor man, having a diseased leg or a sick cow, purchases a little silver model of his leg or his cow, and hangs it upon the ikon (I have seen several such), or, if the offerer be rich, he brings gems to adorn the wonder-working picture. These pictures, on special occasions, are taken to the houses of the faithful, being carried through the streets in procession, the people doffing their caps; and I have seen the more devout, in the hope of receiving a blessing, run between the bearers and under the picture carried upon their shoulders. At Kasan we saw the coffin of Bishop Gregory, from which chips are cut by sufferers to place on their wounds to be healed.

The great ecclesiastical wonder of Kiakhta is its cathedral, said to be the finest in Eastern Siberia, and to have cost 1,400,000 roubles, equal at the time of building to at least £150,000. It was built at the expense of the Kiakhta merchants, and possesses some excellent bells.*

In bells, the Russian Church is the richest in the world—so far, at least, as regards their size. The largest we have in England—that of Christ Church

The monk who accompanied us, and who was, intellectually, superior to some I have met, said that it was a well-known fact, and believed by all, that the relics of saints placed upon diseased parts of the body, and used with faith, are good for healing. The bishop, he said, died 200 years ago, but the wood of the alleged coffin did not appear to me to have reached the age of 200 weeks, and the whole concern looked modern.

* This reminds me that, though allusions have often been made to churches, I have not yet described what a Russian church is like. It should be premised, then, that the ideas of an Englishman and a Russian differ widely as to what a grand church should be. Given an English committee, money in hand, and they say, "Go to; let us build a church to the praise and glory of—the architect;" whereas a Russian merchant, his pocket full of roubles, seeks him out a lapidary, to whom he takes emeralds, rubies, diamonds, and pearls; a smith, to whom he consigns poods of silver; and a cunning workman, who can emblazon and embroider priestly robes and ecclesiastical garments. The consequence is that the English ecclesiologist, standing before "a fine church" in Russia, finds almost nothing upon which to expend his vocabulary of architectural terms. He sees merely wood, stone, or brick and plaster buildings, not too evenly finished, and whitewashed over in such a fashion that, but for their proportions, they would not be thought too good for an English homestead.

The Russian churches are so far alike that they are all modelled on the Byzantine style of architecture—a Byzantine church having been described as a "gabled Greek cross, with central dome inscribed in a square." On the exterior, besides the central, there is sometimes a western dome, often there is one at each angle of the square, and, occasionally, one at each end of the cross. Accordingly, instead of spires, the eye of a traveller in Russia becomes accustomed to cross-crowned domes, which, as they are brightly painted and sometimes covered even with gold, and furnished with bells, affect both eye and ear not unpleasingly.

On entering a Russian church from the west, the internal arrangement

THE GREAT BELL OF MOSCOW AND IVAN VELIKI TOWER. Page 333

Oxford, weighing 7 tons—is but a baby compared with many in Russia. The largest in Petersburg weighs 23 tons; "Great John," in the older capital, weighs 96 tons; whilst the old "Tsar Kolokol," or the King of Bells, in Moscow, weighed originally nearly 200 tons, or 432,000 lbs. Reckoning their value at 18 silver roubles per pood, we get a price for our Oxford bell of £1,100; and for that of the largest one of Moscow of £32,000. This monster bell is 26 ft. high, and 67 ft. round!

It was neither its bells, however, nor its architecture that made Kiakhta cathedral "a fine church," but rather its costly fittings. It has two altars, both of silver; a candlestick with numerous rubies and emeralds, and a large chandelier studded with precious stones. More striking still, perhaps, was the profusion of objects made of solid silver, such as the "royal doors," which are said to weigh 2,000 lbs.; and, above all, the

is seen to be fourfold: first, the narthex, or porch, which was anciently for catechumens and penitents; next the nave, or body of the church; then a narrow platform, raised by steps, answering to the choir; and, beyond that, the sanctuary. The sanctuary is divided into three chambers: the central one being called "the altar," in which stands the holy table, and behind it the bishop's throne; the southern chamber forming the sacristy, where are kept the vestments and treasures; whilst that on the north is for preparing the sacramental elements. The sanctuary is parted off from the choir by a high panelled screen, called the *iconostasis*, pierced by three doors, the centre opening being called the royal gates," on the north side of which hangs a gilded sacred picture the Virgin, and on the south side a picture of our Saviour, and the patron saint of the church. The remaining parts of the screen are covered with other pictures, upon the frames and coverings of which, apart from their artistic value, an almost fabulous amount is sometimes lavished. The precious stones on the picture of Our Lady of Kasan, for instance, in Petersburg, are valued at £15,000; whilst, at Moscow, one emerald on the picture of the Holy Virgin of Vladimir is valued at £10,000—the value of the whole of those on this latter ikon being estimated at £45,000.

ikonostasis of gold and glass, or crystal—the value of the last, no doubt, being considerably enhanced by the cost of carriage to so remote a spot. There were also several paintings, executed at great expense in Europe.

We mounted the tower, and from thence had a view of the surrounding country and of the three towns of Troitzkosavsk, Kiakhta, and the Chinese Maimatchin. On a slight elevation, about a mile to the north, at the head of an open sand-valley between two ranges of moderately high hills, lay Troitzkosavsk, with its 4,600 inhabitants, its school, houses, shops, Government buildings, and a number of persons and officials who could not strictly be called merchants. There is also a large building which formerly was the Custom House, where the duties on tea were collected.* Below us was Kiakhta, with about 400 inhabitants, the abode of Russian mercantile aristocrats and their belongings, making a population, according to Hoppe's Almanack, of about 5,000. The town lies snugly in a hollow, between hills of sand and fir-trees, well sheltered from northerly winds, and opening out southwards towards Mongolia. A small rivulet, called the Bura, runs through the hollow, and, turning westward to the sandy plain, makes its way at last into the Selenga. The country round looks sandy and dry, which is in keeping with the meteorological conditions of the place. Southerly winds prevail, and there is a deficiency of moisture in the atmosphere; hence they have only a slight fall during the year either of rain or of snow. So much is this the case that wheeled

* All duties are now arranged at Irkutsk, and the annual quantity of *leaf*-tea (exclusive of brick-tea) that passes through is upwards of 5,000 tons.

vehicles are used all through the winter, and goods and travellers at that season are thus driven some miles out of Troitzkosavsk to the spot where snow begins, and sledges are usable. Kiakhta is about 2,500 feet above the sea level. The greatest cold in 1877 was in February, when the thermometer stood at 42° below zero; whilst the greatest heat that year, namely 100°·5, was in August.

On the first morning after our arrival, our host sent us in his carriage for a drive of 20 miles to Ust-Keran, the summer residence of Mr. Tokmakoff, where also we expected to find a fellow-countryman, who, we heard, was Professor of English in the gymnase at Troitzkosavsk. It was a fine day, and our horses dashed along over a wide extent of country, somewhat suggestive of Salisbury plain. We saw very few people, but, happening to meet a vehicle, we pulled up, and my interpreter, having descended, went to the carriage to know if we were taking the right road. He called to me that we were right for Madame Tokmakoff's, upon which I shouted, "Ask him if the Englishman is there!" whereupon someone in the carriage replied, "I am the Englishman." It was pleasant to hear this spoken in my native tongue, and I hastened to make the acquaintance of Mr. Frank M——, who was spending his vacation as tutor, and teaching English, in the very family to which we were going. He therefore turned back, and accompanied us to Madame Tokmakoff's, by whom we were heartily welcomed, and where we were reminded of home by the sight of cricket-bats, stumps, and sundry other English things.

The great event of the afternoon was driving some miles further to a Buriat lamasery, or monastery,

inhabited by priests, for whom I had taken some Scriptures; but none of them spoke Russian, and as we could not well make them understand, I left the books with our friend to give when an interpreter could explain, and this little commission he kindly performed. I shall have occasion to speak of this lamasery hereafter. On our way we had to cross a river, the vehicle being put on a raft, and the horses swam through the stream—not considered extraordinary in these parts, for the same evening we saw a dozen horses returning from their work, and when they came to the river, they plunged in of their own accord, and swam across.

One of the men on the bank was very much puzzled to make me out, especially as I asked questions, and made notes of the replies. He seemed to think there might be "something up," but said that "I wore no official clothes, and so he could not tell what sort of a '*tchinovnik*' I was." His suspicions, however, abated, and his vanity seemed tickled, when he was told that I had come from a very far country, that I was anxious to know about their manners and customs, and made notes of what I heard and saw to tell my countrymen on my return. After inspecting the monastery, we drove back to Kiakhta the same evening, having spent a particularly agreeable day.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MONGOLIAN FRONTIER AT MAIMATCHIN.

Outlook into Mongolia.—Town of Maimatchin without women.—Visit to a Chinese merchant.—Refreshments.—Attendants.—Purchases.—Tea-bricks for coin.—The town.—Buddhist temple.—Chinese malefactors.—Their punishments.—Chinese dinner.—Food.—Intoxicating drinks.—Route to Peking.—Travellers.—Modes of conveyance.—Manners of the desert.—Postal service.

AS we stood on the top of Kiakhta church, we could see, as already observed, the three towns of Troitzkosavsk, Kiakhta, and Maimatchin. The former two were like other Siberian towns, but southwards there lay before us something decidedly new. Just over the border was a veritable Chinese town; then came a broad plain, covered with sand and herbage, with the horizon bounded by the hills of Mongolia, beyond which the imagination was left to picture its capital, Urga, and, further south, the great wall of China. Before continuing our journey eastwards, therefore, I shall describe our visit to Maimatchin, and offer a few observations upon the route over the Mongolian frontier to Peking.

Mai-ma-tchin signifies, in Chinese, "buy and sell," and so is applied to this border town as a "a place of trade." It has a population, we were told, of 3,000, and differs in one respect, at all events, from all the cities upon the face of the earth, in that the inhabitants

are all of the male sex. Not a woman is to be found in the town, a baby's music is never heard there, and the streets are void of girls and boys. Not that the men, however, are all bachelors, for some of them have wives and families in China proper. Nor are they all woman-haters or henpecked husbands. We did indeed hear of one man, a British subject, who so far agreed with Solomon as to the undesirability of living with a brawling woman, even though it were in a wide house, that he had fled from his island home, and retired to a house-top in the wilds of Siberia, where he is living in prosperity, and whither his spouse has not pursued him. But the fact is, that among the curious arrangements of the Chinese at the time of their early treaties with the Russians, and in order that their celestial subjects might not become rooted to the soil, but consider themselves as sojourners only, they have forbidden that women should live in Maimatchin. Hence a paterfamilias of Maimatchin, if he wishes to visit his wife and children, must undertake a month's journey across the desert on the back of a camel, and return by the same means; so that a few such journeys may well give wings to his desire speedily to make his fortune and return home.

We took the opportunity of paying an afternoon visit to Maimatchin on the first day of our arrival at Kiakhta, Mr. Koecher kindly accompanying us. After passing out of the wooden gate of Kiakhta we found ourselves on a piece of neutral ground, about 500 yards wide, between the two empires. On the south side is a palisade pierced for the principal gate, shielded from view by a high wooden screen some eight or ten paces from the wall. Behind this screen we entered Mai-

matchin, and found ourselves in a new world. The town is built inside a strong wooden enclosure, about 400 yards square, with four or five mud-paved streets. They are regular, however, tolerably clean, and, for China, wide,—wide enough perhaps to allow of a London omnibus being driven through them. The houses are of one storey, built of unburnt bricks of mud and wood, and are thus solid and tidy, and are surrounded by courtyards. At the entrances are screens that shut out the river from the street, which are painted with diabolical-looking figures, to frighten away evil spirits. This represents, however, the houses of the well-to-do merchants. Towards the southern part of the town are the mean, windowless houses of the poor, which have little of the neatness and propriety of the above.

We were taken first to visit one of the Chinese merchants named Van-Tchan-Taï; and on entering his courtyard we found it surrounded by a number of doors, some entering the warehouses, the kitchen, out-houses, etc., and one leading to the shop and dwelling-place of the merchant. The door consisted of a suspended transparent screen, admitting the air, and yet keeping out flies and insects. The window-frames were ornamented and covered with paper. None looked into the street, but all into the courtyard. Inside the house were two compartments, an outer and an inner. In the outer chamber we were seated on a raised platform, or divan, which serves for a sleeping-place for the clerks and assistants by night, and for a dining-place by day, when the bedding and cushions are neatly rolled up and ornamentally arranged. This platform is heated by a flue beneath, and on the edge

in front is kept, always burning, a small charcoal fire, which serves for lighting pipes and heating grog. Round the wall hung illuminated texts, from the writings of Confucius, and various pictures, one of which we were told was a representation of the god of happiness. And a very stout personage he looked! But this is strictly in keeping with Chinese notions, for they delight to load their deities with collops of fat, prosperity and abundance of flesh in their eyes having great affinity. A number of little birds were in the room, not in cages, but on perches resembling those on which parrots are kept in England.

The merchant invited us to drink tea, and told us that the Chinese use this beverage without sugar or milk three times a day; namely, at rising, at noon, and at seven in the evening. They have substantial meals at nine in the morning and four in the afternoon. When they discovered I was English, they were curious to know all about us, making various inquiries, trying to imitate our words and sounds, even to laughing, and examining carefully such things as were shown them, as watches, pencils, and knives. We were no less curious to pry into their affairs, and learn of them all we could. The merchant employed 23 "clerks," 18 in Maimatchin, and the remainder at a branch establishment in some other part of the world. We did not make out, however, whether this number included shop assistants, warehousemen, servants, cooks, etc., or whether it consisted only of actual writers. They seemed all dressed alike, from the master downwards; that is, in a suit of blue nankeen, and black skull caps. Suspended on the wall, and covered with paper to keep them from dust, were two or three white

straw hats, of depressed conical shape, with a horsehair tassel on the top, seemingly reserved for summer use or gala days. One of the attendants had a black dress edged with white, and on inquiry he was found to be the coachman in half mourning. Chinese full mourning must not be of silk, is all white, and worn 100 days after the death of a relative, during which time the head is not shaved. Black and white is afterwards worn for three years, one of its features being a small white ball on the top of the cap. As the servants stood about waiting on us, their discipline appeared to be very much of the patriarchal character; none seemed greater or less than another, except it were the chief clerk, who received, we found, about £30 a year; whilst the "boys" received from £5 and upwards, their food being in all cases provided. This chief clerk cultivated a straggling moustache, which is the privilege of all Chinese men after they arrive at 30 years of age. He had also very long nails, protruding, perhaps, half an inch, which evidently were considered beautiful. It is the custom of Chinese gentlemen and ladies to have long nails, that other persons may be aware of their rank in society, for with such impediments they could not labour. This senior also seemed fond of his pipe, which held just so much tobacco as enabled him to take five good strong whiffs only, and he then blew out of the pipe, with a peculiar noise, the remainder of the tobacco and ashes.

Whilst sipping our tea we proceeded to make purchases. The principal articles of Chinese export into Russia are teas, cottons, nankeens, silks, good satins, rhubarb, and many articles of curiosity and ingenuity. The exports from Siberia are generally furs. As we

sat in the merchant's shop, it was a matter for conjecture as to where the merchandise was kept, for it was not visible. A number of articles, however, were brought forth from mysterious cupboards and drawers, and we heard that the Chinese allow as little of their property as possible to be seen by the authorities, lest they should be more highly taxed. So far, therefore, as appearances go in a Chinese shop, the American dealer's window-notice would be eminently appropriate: "If you don't see what you want, ask for it." We did this, and found it successful. My first purchase was a piece of silk called Chin-chun-cha, supposed to be of sufficient measure for two suits of clothes. This silk is undyed, and washes and wears so well that it is a favourite material throughout Siberia for gentlemen's summer suits, and sometimes for ladies' dresses.

The Chinese are fond of having a couple of balls in the hand, at idle times, to roll and rub one over the other with the fingers, and so play with; for the same reason, probably, that the Turks like to have beads in the hand. Several of these balls were offered to me. One pair was of Chinese jade, which, on being rubbed together, emitted flashes of electric light. Gilt buttons, too, were shown as a rarity, but their marks betrayed that they came from Birmingham. We bought some embroidered purses of native workmanship, and cups and saucers. The saucers are of a lozenge-shape, and of metal, with an indentation fitted to receive the bottom of the cup, which has no handle. Hence, in drinking the tea, it was not necessary to finger the cup, but merely to hold the saucer and drink from the cup resting therein. Some of the drinking vessels were of wood, but lacquered and covered with a varnish which

made them quite capable of holding boiling water. Our most comical purchase, perhaps, was a pair of furred ear-pockets, connected by a piece of elastic, for use in frosty weather.

After taking refreshment, we looked about the house and yard, into the kitchen, which was clean enough, and into the warehouse, with its piles of chests of tea, and were amused to see them take a hollow iron auger, something like a large cheese taster, and drive this into the corner of a tea-chest to bring thereout a sample handful of the fragrant herb. I contented myself, however, with buying a brick of tea, as a greater curiosity. It measures about nine inches by six, and is three-quarters of an inch thick, and might better be called, as it once was in Germany, "tile" tea. This article was formerly used for coin in certain parts of Siberia, and is so still in Mongolia. The owner of a circus, since my visit, made his way through Kiakhta to Urga. The stud and its riders greatly delighted the Mongolians, who are excellent horsemen, and, as the proprietor accepted the "current coin of the realm," his cashier's office presented the unusual appearance of being filled to overflowing with bricks of tea! We had cause, therefore, for congratulation, that we had not to carry a quantity of this very inconvenient form of cash.

After leaving the house we wandered through the streets, examining the wares exposed for sale, like those we had seen on the Chinese stalls in the market-place of Troitzkosavsk, and the looking round at which, in both places, gave us much amusement. We found all sorts of Chinese knick-knacks; and the poorest attempts at cutlery, in the shape of knives, scissors, and razors,

that ever I saw. The razors bore a strong resemblance to miniature hatchets, and, on steaming across the Pacific, I observed that their use was not confined to men, for the Chinese women think so much of having the hair cut away smoothly from the back of the neck, that one female on board was seen thus acting the barber on behalf of her sister. Beads and hats were likewise exposed for sale, brushes and combs, pieces of flint and steel. and Buddhist rosaries; which last, evidently, were considered finely perfumed, but we thought the smell abominable. A piece of Chinese vanity we saw consisted of circular felt pads, highly dyed with rouge, with which the people rub, and so redden, their faces. Several of these curiosities we bought, bargaining for the price by signs, to the mutual amusement of buyers and salesmen.

We were taken to the Buddhist temple, the precincts of which appeared to comprise the houses of the governor (or, as he is called, the *zurgutchay*), and the chief priest; also a theatre, and something like a prison. In the court of the temple were placed two or three cannon, which are fired daily when the governor is going to sleep. The theatre, we found, was open only on fête days, and, if the report of travellers be true, the plays are sometimes grossly obscene. This, however, is only in keeping with the pictures seen in the houses, and sold openly in the streets, which are too licentious to bear description.

We saw in the court of the temple two malefactors, who had iron rings round their necks, attached to which were chains, about five feet long, with enormous links, and of great weight, weighing, I should judge, in all, upwards of 50 lbs. They had chains, too, upon

their hands and legs, and, being exceedingly dirty and ill clad, they looked somewhat ferocious. One of them had his chain coiled about his shoulders for more convenient carriage, and when he saw that I was curious he allowed it to drop towards the ground, showing me the full length of his punishment. I bought the man's rosary for a souvenir. We saw, also, in Maimatchin, another kind of Chinese punishment, in the shape of a wooden collar, made of 6-inch plank, about 2½ feet square, and put about a man's neck. It was said to be more than 100 lbs. in weight, and the unfortunate wearer was prevented by its size from putting his hand to his mouth. He used therefore, in feeding himself, a long wooden spoon, but he looked anything but comfortable. His accusation was written on the collar, setting forth his name and family, and he was to wear his collar night and day for a month, and that for *fighting!* but I am not clear whether it was for an ordinary pugilistic encounter, or for attempted violence to a superior.

As we walked about the streets it was plain that, though we were distinctly in the Chinese empire and not in Russia, yet that the people of the two border towns were on the most friendly footing. Chinese merchants visit the Russians freely, drink tea, smoke cigarettes, and chatter,—not "pigeon English," but "pigeon Russian." To this good feeling I presume it was that we were indebted for an invitation to dine, two days after, with the merchant upon whom we called. We were particularly anxious to do this; for to eat a Chinese dinner at Maimatchin had been one of the curious treats I had promised myself when thinking of pushing on so far as Kiakhta. At the

same time, Mr. Michie's declaring that a Chinese dinner, to which Kiakhta merchants take their friends, was "a feast most Europeans would rather undergo the incipient stages of starvation than come within the smell of it," had rather terrified me as to the horrors one might be expected to eat. I determined, however, to place bread on one side of my plate and water on the other, and then martyrise myself for the sake of gaining experience, to say nothing of showing myself a person of good breeding in Chinese eyes, by tasting *everything*; and I hoped that, if anything particularly nasty came into my mouth, it might be neutralized or speedily swallowed by the aid of a piece of bread or a draught of water. Things were not so bad, however, as I had feared, and we were none of us made ill. Calling on our way to dinner at Mr. Tokmakoff's, I begged a small loaf of half-white bread; and, thus prepared, we presented ourselves at the house of Van Tchan Taï.

There were five in the party, which included Mr. Koecher, our Russian host; Mr. M——, our fellow-countryman; Mr. Interpreter; myself, and a Russian friend. We were shown first into the inner compartment, and seated on the divan, whilst they brought us tea, dried fruits, and confections, such as candied ginger, dried walnuts and Mandarin oranges, salted almonds, and sugared ditto, melon seeds, etc., etc. We then adjourned to the outer chamber, where the dinner was spread on a table. But what a table! It was just about three feet square, and on this were placed, as a commencement, no less than 10 dishes, besides our own plates. These dishes, or saucers, of meats were replaced to the number of 30. Further east I met a

man who told me that when he dined at Maimatchin they gave him 64 dishes! At this tiny table we were seated, and each was provided with a small saucer, three inches in diameter, half filled with dark-looking vinegar, into which we were supposed to dip everything before carrying it to the mouth. Of this I soon got tired, and began to eat things *au naturel*, that is as far as possible; but most of the courses were so disguised by confectionery and culinary art that we had to ask of almost every plate, What is this? Happily the plates were so exceedingly small that to taste of each did not seriously strain one's eating powers; and by tasting first, and then asking what it was, all prejudice was taken away till it was too late to have any. But we discovered that among the dishes we had eaten were beans, garlic, a kind of sea-weed cooked like seakale, and a green kind also; likewise radishes cut in slices, swallows' eggs boiled, and rissoles of meat; various sorts of marine vegetables, and, I think, birds' nests. Towards the end of the feast appeared a *samovar*, but not like the Russian article of that name,—the difference resembling that between an "outside" and an "inside" Dublin car, of which an Irishman said that, with an outside car the wheels were inside, whereas with an inside car the wheels were outside. So with the Chinese samovar, the boiling part was exposed to view, and contained the soup, in which were small pieces of meat, vermicelli, and rice puddings, the size of tennis balls, for the eating of which they brought us chop-sticks—I suppose, that we might try our hands, for at the earlier part of the meal they had given us knives and forks. Chop-sticks are a pair of cylindrical rods, rather

longer, and not quite so thick as lead pencils, which are both held between the thumb and fingers of the right hand, and are used as tongs to take the food and carry it to the mouth—an operation by no means easy to the unpractised. Our host did not sit at table, or eat with us, but stood looking on, and giving orders to his boys or "clerks." Each guest was provided with a tiny cup about an inch or a little more in diameter, and perhaps half an inch deep. Into this, at an early stage of the proceedings, was poured, from a diminutive kettle, hot *mai-ga-lo*, or Chinese brandy, tasting, it was said, somewhat like whisky. It is exceedingly strong, though not so potent as another kind of which we heard, called *khanshin*, and which not only makes a man intoxicated on the day he drinks it, but if he takes a glass of water only on the morrow, the intoxicating effect is repeated. When they came to pour me out brandy I declined, the propriety of which our host recognised at once; for when my friends told him I was a "lama," or priest, he said that "*their* lamas were not allowed to drink brandy." It was comforting, therefore, to find that we had at least one good thing in common.

Whilst we were in the house of Van Tchan Tai there came in a Mongolian lama, to whom I was introduced as an *English* lama. The Mongolian lamas do not confine themselves to spiritual functions; for this man was a contractor for the carriage of goods across the desert to and from China, which leads me to say something of this curious journey. The Kiakhta-Peking route was not that followed by the earliest embassies sent overland from Siberia, nor by Marco Polo in his marvellous travels in Tartary. In fact, it

is remarkable how very little has been known, until lately, concerning this part of Central Asia, and how little is known still.*

After the building of Kiakhta and Maimatchin, the route across the desert was of course extensively used by the caravans, though I am not aware that it was followed by any Englishman or celebrated traveller till within the past quarter of a century.†

There are six Englishmen, four of whom I have met, who, as well as some ladies, have travelled this Mongolian route within the past 18 years.‡ The

* We owe some of our early geographical information about Eastern Mongolia to the rupture between the Russians and Chinese on the Amur. The Chinese took several prisoners, and transported them to Peking, subsequently allowing Russian priests to be sent to minister to their spiritual necessities. When, in course of time, the prisoners might have returned, they had learned so to like their quarters, that they chose to remain; whereupon "the spiritual mission" was kept up by sending new priests at intervals of ten years, and thus the Russians learned something of the unknown country through which these functionaries travelled.

† Daniel De Foe made his celebrated "Robinson Crusoe" to re-visit his island, and afterwards land in China, where he met with a Jesuit missionary who took him to Peking. Then, crossing the desert, he came to the Argun and Nertchinsk, and so proceeded to Tobolsk and crossed the Urals to Archangel. This, of course, is fiction; but it may be that De Foe, who was never abroad in his life, and who published his "Robinson Crusoe" in 1719, had heard of a route used in his day across the Mongolian desert. When we come to the interesting writings of the Roman missionary Huc, we have, of course, a good deal of information about Mongolia; but his route lay in the south along the great wall of China towards the Himalayas, and not at all in the north.

‡ One is Mr. Howell, formerly a British resident in China, who crossed from Shanghai to Kiakhta; another is Mr. Wylie, who was connected with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and who crossed from Kiakhta to Peking; but neither of these gentlemen has favoured the public, as far as I am aware, with information as to his wanderings. In 1863 Mr. Michie undertook "the Siberian overland route from Peking to St. Petersburg," and wrote an account of his Mongolian travels, which was the first English book that had appeared on that part of Asia. Mr. Michie has been followed by three other English writers. In 1869, by Mr. William Athenry Whyte, F.R.G.S., who wrote, "A Land Journey from

traveller, however, who has given us the most solid and scientific information about the part of Mongolia of which we are speaking is the Russian Colonel Prejevalsky, who spent three years, beginning in 1870, by travelling first from Kiakhta to Peking, then turning northward to Manchuria, and afterwards following in the tracks of Huc not quite to Lhassa, but as far as the Blue River, or the Yang-tse-kiang; and then, turning back, did the most daring thing of all, crossing the desert of Gobi from Ala-shan to Urga and Kiakhta. This journey had never before been attempted by a European, and was accomplished in the height of summer, when sometimes the party could obtain neither pasture nor water.

The distance between Kiakhta and Peking is a thousand miles, and Europeans who wish to make the journey have the choice of two modes of conveyance, either by post-horses or by caravan camels engaged by special bargain with their owners. So, at least, says Colonel Prejevalsky, though Mr. Milne tells a different tale, for he had intended to cross Mongolia in company with a Russian officer by courier horses; but he found that, according to the agreement between the Russian and Chinese Governments, it was allow-

Asia to Europe, being an account of a camel and sledge journey from Canton to St. Petersburg, through the plains of Mongolia and Siberia;" in 1875-6, by Mr. John Milne, F.G.S., who crossed Europe and Siberia to Kiakhta, Peking, and Shanghai, and read a paper concerning his journey before the Asiatic Society of Japan; and, in 1877, by Captain W. Shepherd, R.E., who returned "homeward through Mongolia and Siberia," and wrote a short account in the Royal Engineers' Journal. I heard some of these travellers spoken of by the residents in Siberia, and the Russians seemed mightily surprised that Captain Shepherd should have taken such a journey alone, and unable to speak a word of their language. I suppose Messrs. Howell and Wylie did the same, but I have heard of Captain Shepherd's exploit as far away as the Crimea, and so lately as last autumn.

able only for such couriers as were Russian subjects to take the horse road, and therefore he was obliged to go the ordinary caravan route by camels. He made an agreement with some Mongol carriers, that they were to take him from Kiakhta to Kalgan, near the great wall of China, in 30 days, for which he was to pay them £15. For every day less than thirty he was to pay ten shillings extra; for every day beyond that time they were to pay him ten shillings. There was also a clause that a tent, fire, and water should be supplied. The ordinary procedure of the caravan in winter is to be on the move till about seven or eight in the evening, and then stop for tea, and travel on till midnight or two in the morning. A halt is then made for sleep, and all start again by eight or ten. They eat in winter only once a day, and, according to Mr. Milne's account, a winter journey across the desert is anything but comfortable. Mr. Michie, however, and Captain Shepherd, who travelled in milder weather, give a very different account, and speak in pleasant terms of a nomad life. It is so utterly different from any European experience of motion and living that, though it has several drawbacks—and a month is rather too long to be wholly agreeable—yet those who have passed through such a phase of travel look back upon it as a pleasant change from the humdrum life of a homeward voyage in a P. and O. steamer.

The pace at which the caravan proceeds is provokingly slow, and the jolting of the rude, clumsy camel-cart makes walking, for a great part of the day, preferable to driving; but there is game to be shot, and the solitude of the desert is now and then relieved

by arrivals at Mongolian *yourts*, or tents, where, conversation being the only form of newspaper they know, there is a general wagging of tongues, and a shower of questions to be asked. The Mongol's one notion of wealth is the number of a man's flocks and herds; and thus, if the Englishman is asked what he is worth, he has to translate his riches into thousands of sheep, horses, and bulls, and then explain his possessions. Again, the monotony of the way may be relieved occasionally by meeting with the Russian post.*

The manners and customs of the Mongolians are, in many cases, exceedingly interesting, as taking one back to the habits of a nomadic and pastoral people. But it is not necessary to detail them here, as we shall have before us, in a subsequent chapter, the Buriats, who are a branch of the Mongolian race; and in treating of the one we shall be in many respects treating also of the other.

* Postal communication was established by treaty between the Russians and Chinese in 1858 and 1860. The Russian Government organized, at its own expense, a regular transmission of both light and heavy mails between Kiakhta, Peking, and Tien-tsin. The Mongols contract to carry the post as far as Kalgan, the Chinese the rest of the way. The Russians have opened post-offices at four places, Urga, Kalgan, Peking, and Tien-tsin. The light mails leave Kiakhta and Tien-tsin three times a month, the heavy mails only once a month. The heavy mails are carried on camels, escorted by two Cossacks from Kiakhta; while the light mails are accompanied only by Mongols, and are carried on horses. The light mails are taken from Kiakhta to Peking in two weeks, whilst the heavy mails take from 20 to 24 days; and the cost of all this to the Russian Government is about £2,400 a year, the receipts at the four offices amounting to about £430.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FROM KIAKHTA TO CHITA.

Farewell ceremonies.—Writing home of changed plans.—Caravans.—An iron foundry.—Buriat yemstchiks.—Methods of driving.—Salutations.—Insignificant post-stations.—Visit to a missionary to the Buriats.—Russian missions in Japan.—A remarkable meeting.—The Yablonoi mountains.—Chita.—Visit to the Governor and prison.

WE had determined, after dining at Maimatchin, to continue our journey eastwards. Mr. Koecher, however, would not let us go without giving us a supplementary dinner; for the Chinese spread is looked upon as a matter of curiosity rather than of genuine gastronomy, and we did not expect to get another respectable meal for many hundreds of miles. After this supplementary dinner, therefore, we prepared to start. The hospitality and kindness of the Siberians to departing friends is unbounded; and, among other customs, they have one method of doing honour to a guest at a feast which is considered a mark of great respect. It is called the *podkeedovate*, and is done by seizing the unfortunate victim and laying him flat on the extended and clasped hands of two rows of guests, who toss him up and catch him. When Mr. Collins, their first American visitor, was at Kiakhta, they tossed him up in this manner to the ceiling, which he touched, palpably. In our own case, happily, we were spared this honour, and were dismissed with the repeated

shakings of the hand of which the Russians are so fond; provided, however, it be not over the threshold. Twice I found myself transgressing in this respect—once to an American, who had become half Russianized, and once to a Russian lady. Both of them smiled, and asked me to come right in before shaking hands. What superstition they have upon the subject I know not. Another Russian custom with departing friends is to drive alongside for a few miles, perhaps to the first post-station, and then take a last farewell. This our host did when we left Kiakhta on the evening of Wednesday, the 16th July, and we were then fairly started for a drive of 600 miles. We passed along the road by which we came as far as Verchne Udinsk, or, as I have called it, "the Amur and China junction." Here we took the opportunity to post letters to England, to say that to return from hence would be to leave my work half done, and that we were going on to the Amur, from which Mr. Interpreter was to turn back, whilst I was to continue to the Pacific, and so reach home by completing the circle of the globe; and as I thought to finish the journey in person sooner than a letter would cross Asia and Europe, and I did not know what holes and corners I might get into, or how be detained, my friends were exhorted not to be alarmed if they heard nothing of me for many days. And the exhortation was needed, for I subsequently got into two places from which I could not stir, nor well communicate my whereabouts, so that, notwithstanding my warning, serious and anxious doubts were entertained for my safety.

Whilst travelling eastwards we had frequently met caravans of carts carrying tea. These caravans some-

times reach to upwards of 100 horses; and, as they go at walking pace, and when they come to a river are taken over by ferry, it is not matter for surprise that merchandise should be three months in coming from Irkutsk to Moscow. In winter the rivers, of course, present no difficulty, and hence this season is on some accounts preferred for transport. The number of drivers required for a large convoy is not numerous, and they lighten their work by hanging a bundle of hay on the hinder part of every cart, so that a horse, if hungry, takes good care to keep up with his leader. As we proceeded from Verchne Udinsk we met trains of two-wheeled carts with manufactured iron.* There was one driver to every four or five carts, and this driver had a dormitory on one of his loads, consisting of a rude frame, two-and-a-half by six feet, with a covering of birch-bark, and under this, clad in a sheepskin coat, a man contrives to sleep for many an hour of the night and day. They usually travel about 16 hours (though not at a stretch) out of the 24, and in the summer graze their horses at the side of the road.

We had now left the great highway between China and Europe, and of this we were sternly reminded by

* It is not unlikely that the iron here alluded to had come from Petrovsky Zavod, which is about 100 miles south-east of Verchne Udinsk. These ironworks were established during the reign of Peter the Great, and at one time were worked by convicts; but, so far as they are in activity now, free labour, I believe, is employed. This Zavod was formerly of importance to the locality. The engines for the first steamers that Russia placed on the Amur were made here. Guns, also, have been cast and bored by Russian workmen. There is plenty of coal, too, in the neighbourhood, but it is not much used, as wood is plentiful. I heard very little of the operations carried on at present, but it seems that in the whole Trans-Baikal province there were produced, in 1877, of cast iron 482 tons and of wrought iron 280 tons. Thirty years ago, Petrovski wrought 18 tons of bar iron annually.

the amount of shaking to which we were forced to submit. Also we were introduced to a new set of yemstchiks; for most of our drivers now were Buriats, who tie up their horse's mane like a horn between his ears, and who, like the Russians, have a wonderful knack of sending their horses along without harassing them, the driving being done by the voice and by threatening with the hand. Whip-cracking is unheard in Siberia, and the long, slender, snapping whips of Western Europe are unknown. The Siberian uses a short stock with a lash of hemp, leather, or other flexible substance, but having no snapper at its end. The Russian drivers talk a great deal to their horses, and the speech they use depends much upon the character and performance of the animals. Do they travel well? Then the driver calls them his "brothers," his "doves," his "beauties," his "jewels." On the contrary, an obstinate or lazy horse is called a variety of names the reverse of endearing. He may be called a *sabaka*, or dog, and his maternity disrespectfully ascribed to the race canine. Sometimes the driver rattles off his words as if the creatures understood all the praise he is giving them, after which, on proper occasion, he storms at and scolds them as the veriest hags and jades he ever drove. But I do not remember that this fashion of talking to the horses was so observable among the Buriats, though they drove exceedingly well.

These people have a curious method of salutation, as have several of the peoples with whom we were brought in contact. The Chinese, for instance, fold the hands together, and raise them up and down several times. The Mongols hold up their thumb

to salute, and to clench a bargain one places his hand on the sleeve of the other. The Buriats do much the same, whilst the Russians shake hands for everything, and if they are friends they also kiss.

As we drove along we saw abundance of black and white jackdaws; small birds, like a cross between a canary and a linnet; and, on the distant hills, flocks of sheep. Further south, I have been told, herds of camels are reared, for the sake of their wool, which in these parts grows to a considerable length. The post-stations we passed were far apart and poor, and the villages few. In these last live many Buriats, some Russians, and a few Jews. In one village we saw some very good-looking Jewish women, whom I saluted with a word or two of Hebrew. This, and the showing of our podorojna that we were English, attracted attention to us as strangers. Not long before, some Chinese ambassadors had passed the same way; and one yemstchik, hearing that we were foreigners, thought we too must be ambassadors, and inquired whether he should go and put on his best suit, from which, however, we excused him.

On the evening of the second day after leaving Verchne Udinsk, we reached Koordinska, where lives a Russian priest who is a missionary to the Buriats, and upon whom I wished to call, though, as it was getting towards midnight, I feared we might find the good man in bed. But it was "now or never," and I therefore persisted in going to the house, notwithstanding the Buriat yemstchik's remonstrances, which I afterwards thought may have proceeded from the fear that he should be bewitched, or in some way influenced by the missionary, for I could not get him

to stop his horses within many yards of the house. The missionary did not appear at first particularly amiable on being visited at such an unusual hour; but, when he found that we had good books to give him, he began to change his demeanour, and readily imparted to us information respecting the progress of the mission, telling us that during the previous year 300 Buriats had been baptized east of the Baikal, and more than 1,000 on the west. He showed us, however, that he had already a sufficiency of the Buriat Scriptures—of the same edition, in fact, as those we were distributing—and he did not care to accept more, which rather led me to surmise, what was afterwards confirmed, that the amount of knowledge required by the Russian priests of their converts before baptism is very slender. I do not know either how far they press upon the Buriats the study of the Scriptures, or whether the Buriats are averse to the book. The old man at Selenginsk, Ivlampi Melnikoff, told us that many copies of the Scriptures were left in the hands of his father when the English missionaries took their departure, and that the Buriats would not receive them. They were therefore handed over to a Russian priest; but he was speaking of things as they were forty years ago.

When our missionary friend found that we were really interested in his work, he pressed us, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, to drink tea; but this we declined, as we could not keep the post-horses standing. He was very eager to tell us, before we went, that the Russians were carrying on a successful mission to the Japanese (the liturgy being sung in Russian style in the vernacular), under the directorship

of the Archimandrite Nicolai; and the missionary, dwelling in the Buriat wilderness, was considerably perturbed because someone in Japan had been writing a book, attempting to show that Confucius was greater that Jesus Christ; and as I said that I expected to pass through Japan, he begged that I would get a copy of the life of Confucius, and consult with the Archimandrite how the heretical book might be extinguished. This was the first I heard of the Archimandrite, but, on reaching Nikolaefsk, I found him exceedingly well spoken of by a Lieutenant Yakimoff, who gave me a letter to him to deliver on my arrival in Japan.* Accordingly I hoped to see the said Archimandrite Nicolai, but, before I reached Yokohama, he had returned home to be consecrated bishop. I therefore thought no more of the matter till last autumn, when my hopes were singularly and unexpectedly fulfilled, whilst staying at Kieff on my way to the Caucasus. My companion and I were trying to find someone in the Pechersky monastery who could speak English or French. At last appeared with the

* On my voyage I gathered from a Russian captain that there were in Japan 7 priests, 95 catechists, and 2,000 members, all of whom, not excepting even the priests, were converts to the orthodox Russian Church. In 1876, £1,174 were spent on this mission, which is the only Pagan mission, as far as I know, that the Russians have in foreign parts; and they think their Japanese work a great success, for in the *Oriental Church Magazine* for March 1880, the Russian editor says: "In 1879 the (Russian) Church in Japan numbered a total of 6,000 members, an increase of 2,000 having taken place during one year"; and he adds, "Though the other Christian Churches control over 320 missionaries, and have in their possession enormous pecuniary means, still our (Russian) missionaries have succeeded in gaining full and exclusive control over the northern part of the island of Nipouna, and compete most successfully with their Roman Catholic and Protestant brethren in the central part of the island." "This brilliant success is mainly attributable to the chief of our Japanese mission, Father Nicolai."

monks a tall man in a cassock, dressed like the others, save that his cassock was brown. He said he could speak English, and, after having taken us round to see the sights, he inquired of me where I was labouring in England, or, as he put it, "where I was in service." I told him, and then asked where *he* was "in service." "Oh," said he, "very far off." "Well," I said, "where?" "In Japan," he replied. "Then," said I, "you must be the Father Nicolai, to whom I had a letter last year from Siberia, and who has lately been consecrated bishop." And so it turned out, and thus we had casually fallen in each other's way, thousands of miles from the place of our expected meeting. I dined with him, and we then parted, he to continue his return journey to Japan, whilst I pushed forward to Mount Ararat.

All this, however, was in the unknown future when we were talking to the Russian missionary at Koordinska, who regretted that our visit was so short, and whom we left to continue our journey all night to Chita. In doing so we traversed hilly roads, and on the following day had some extended views as we approached the *Yablonoi*, or Apple-tree Mountains. This range runs in a north-easterly direction, right through the Za-Baikal province; and when, after gradually rising from Verchne Udinsk, which is 1,500 feet, we reached the summit of the range, 4,000 feet above the sea, we were then about 20 miles from Chita. Before us a well-defined range of mountains bounded the horizon to the east, while to the north and south the valley stretched away for miles. We had a fine morning for the descent, and bounding along over a rolling prairie, where herds of cattle were

grazing, had a beautiful view as we approached the town. Moreover, we were at last on the eastern side of the great Altai chain, and consequently the rivers before us differed from all that we had yet seen in Siberia. All the others had been flowing northwards to be emptied into the Arctic Ocean, whereas in the river Chita, from the left, joining the Ingoda from the right, the current was flowing eastward, through a delightful valley, to find its way, 2,000 miles off, into the Pacific. We had before us now, in fact, one of the valleys of the head waters of the Amur, of which valley Baron Rosen says that it is remarkable for its flora, and is called the "garden of Siberia."

Chita stands on the left bank of the Ingoda on a height, bounded on two sides by lofty mountains. To the north lies Lake Onon, on whose shores Genghis Khan, as he marched westwards, held his court of justice, and in whose waters he drowned the condemned. Below this point the Ingoda is navigable for boats and rafts. During the early years of the Amur occupation, much material was floated down from Chita. The town was founded in 1851, when it had a population of 2,600; now it has 3,000. Many of the houses are large and well fitted, and all are of wood. We found shops, at which, however, we had to pay 1*s.* a pound for loaf-sugar, and white bread cost just three times what we had paid for it at Tobolsk.

The Governor's house was the best in the place, and there we presented our letters. His Excellency, M. Pedashenko, gave us a kind reception. I had met on the road, at a post-station, the father of Madame Pedashenko, and he had given me an introduction to his daughter; but Madame was unwell. The Governor,

however, spared no pains to do for us all he could. On learning that I wished to visit the penal colony and gold-mines of Kara, he telegraphed that arrangements might be made for my being conveyed thither; and after this we proceeded to inspect the prison in the town. Outside the building was a black cart, which might be placed in a similar category with our old-fashioned English stocks. Formerly prisoners were taken in this cart to the market-place, and there exposed as outlaws and felons—their accusation being carried on the breast, and a notification attached that they had "lost all their rights." This punishment was said to be abolished now, but I heard of its having been used at Blagovestchensk as lately as the previous year.

The prison at Chita contained 169 prisoners, and cannot, I suppose, be that in which the 30 Decembrists were confined in 1826; for Baron Rosen speaks of Chita in his day as a little village of 300 people. At the time of our visit, they were expecting a new place of confinement to be built—not a day before it was wanted; for the Chita prison was apparently the oldest, and I thought it the poorest and dirtiest, we had seen. The prisoners, too, were shabbily clad, and dirty. One of them was reading a religious book lent him, I think he said, by the priest; but there was no prison library. Indeed, it was very rare to find one, though at Ekaterineburg we were told that a prisoner who wished to read might have a prayer-book. Several of the Chita prisoners were from Russia, and condemned to hard labour. There was a carpenters' shop, in which some were forced to work, and others did so for their own pleasure. Speaking generally, those in

the building appeared to be enjoying an easy time; for the doors of the wards were open to allow their going in and out of the yard as they chose, and many were lying about sleeping in the sun. We were told that they found it difficult to sleep at night by reason of vermin, and so were sleeping instead by day. This illustrates a remark of Goryantchikoff in "Buried Alive," to the effect that his prison was never free from fleas even in winter, and that in summer they increased. In the prison kitchen we saw them cutting up rhubarb leaves to put in the soup (fresh cabbage not being ready at the time of our visit), which reminds me of another remark of Goryantchikoff, who writes as if it were a normal thing with him to have black-beetles swimming in his soup. His remark about fleas I can readily believe; but by "black-beetles" I presume he refers to little brown insects, about half an inch long, called "*Tarakans*," which swarm in the houses of the Siberian peasants. Happily, however, they are non-belligerent, and I was told by an Englishman that the people are not averse to them. Why they should daily walk into the copper to be boiled in Mr. Goryantchikoff's soup, I know not; but one thing about prison soup I do know, that, in the irregular, uncomfortable (I was going to say half-starved) condition in which I have sometimes travelled in certain parts of Russia, I have more than once tasted prison soup, of which, but for appearance sake, I would fain have eaten, not a mere spoonful to give my opinion thereon, but a plateful to satisfy my appetite. I should not have chosen that, however, seasoned with rhubarb leaves.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BURIATS.

Country of the Buriats.—Their physiognomy and costume.—Habitations.—Mongol yourts.—Hospitality.—Fuel.—Possessions in cattle.—Character of Buriats.—Their religions.—Buddhist Buriats.—The soul of Buddha.—The lamas.—Their celibacy, classification, employments, disabilities.—Buddhist doctrines.—A prayer cylinder.—Christian Buriats.—English missions.—Reports of English travellers.—Results of Russian missions.—Distribution of Buriat Scriptures.

SOON after leaving Verchne Udinsk, we entered upon the vast steppe which occupies a large portion of the Trans-Baikal. Here we found ourselves in the heart of the Buriats' country. We first met with these people a few miles on the western side of Irkutsk, and their physiognomy at once told us they belonged to a different race from any we had seen. They have very large skulls, square faces, low and flat foreheads; the cheek-bones are high and wide apart, the nose flat, eyes elongated, the skin swarthy and yellowish, and the hair jet black. With the men the hair is allowed to grow upon the crown of the head, and is plaited into a queue that hangs down their backs. What remains is cut close, but not shaved, as with the Tatars. The head-dress of the women is exceedingly rich, and consists of silver, coral, polished beads of Ural malachite, and mother-of-pearl. They wear their hair in two thick braids, which fall from the

temples below the shoulders, and the unmarried girls interweave their braids with strings of coral. Several women had many silver ornaments hanging on their breasts, and in some cases a straight rod at the back of the head stuck out horizontally for several inches on

MISS BOU-TA-TYO, A BURIAT YOUNG LADY.

either side, and to this the hair was tied. I was desirous to purchase one of these head-dresses for a curiosity, but they were not to be had at shops. The stones and metal are purchased, and made up by household skill. I was, however, somewhat taken aback on finding that their value frequently amounted to twenty or thirty

pounds sterling. At a post-station we asked a Buriat what he would take for his hat. To our surprise, he asked the modest price of fifteen roubles merely for the silver knob at the top. The Buriats are said to wear no linen, but a wealthy bride's dowry sometimes consists of 40 cases of the richest furs.

As for their habitations, the Buriats are such inveterate dwellers in tents that though they are supposed now to be civilized where they come in contact with the Russians, yet they make a tent of the house by piercing a hole in the middle of the roof, and have the fire in the centre of the floor. When visiting Madame Tokmakoff, she had a Buriat man-servant, for whom a Russian house was provided, but in which he could not be happy until he had thus readjusted his dwelling. We entered a Buriat house at Cheelantoui, although only the woman was at home. There was within a rude wooden bench, on which we were invited to sit, and on it was lying a pair of coral ornaments for the head. These the woman, on our noticing them, immediately put on, and she then invited us to drink tea. To have declined would have been considered highly unpolite. Even among the Russians, a general pleasantly told me that he took a refusal to eat food in his house like a slap in the face. Moreover, we were anxious to stand well in the good graces of our Buriat hostess, for we wished to be admitted to the Buddhist temple, and she was the only person in the place through whom we could communicate in Russian with the lamas. But to see the tea served, and have to drink it, was no small trial. Over the fire hung a large open iron pot, full of a bubbling liquid covered with scum. In this was a ladle, which our fair hostess

filled and refilled, and emptied back into the pot. Then, scraping the scum away, she took a ladleful of the decoction, poured it into cups, and gave us to drink. We were told it was tea flavoured with salt. I only hope it was nothing worse, but it will hardly be thought matter for surprise if, after tasting it, I had an accident, upset the beverage, and declined a second cup. We had a good look, however, at the furniture of the dwelling, the most interesting item of which was a family altar, something like a small sideboard with drawers. On it were round bronze cups of liquor, and other offerings. There were also about the room some objects of ornamented metal, betokening clever workmanship.

This represents the Buriat in his civilized condition. One gets a better idea of his native habits and antecedents by going away from the haunts of the Russians, or even into the "land of grass," as their Mongolian brothers call their desert. There they live in tents, which, like those of other Siberian aborigines, are constructed with poles meeting at the top, but covered with felt instead of deerskins. The hospitality of all Mongol tribes is unvarying. Every stranger is welcome, and has the best his host can give; and the more he consumes, the better will all be pleased. The staple dish of the Mongol yourt is boiled mutton, but it is unaccompanied with capers, or any other kind of sauce or seasoning. A sheep "goes to pot" immediately on being killed, and when the meat is cooked, it is lifted out of the hot water and handed, all dripping and steaming, to the guests. Each man takes a large lump on his lap, or any convenient support, and then cuts off little pieces, which he tosses into his mouth. The best piece is reserved for the guest of honour, and, as a mark

of special attention, is frequently put into his mouth by the greasy fingers of his host. After the meat is devoured, the broth is drunk, and this concludes the meal. Knives and cups are the only aids to eating, and as each man carries his own "outfit," the dinner-cloth and service does not take long to arrange. The entire work consists in seating the party around a pot of cooked meat. The Buriats are famous at drinking brick tea, infusing with it rye meal, mutton fat, and salt obtained from the lakes of the steppe. I suspect it was this we had to taste at Cheelantoui. So important an article of food is this tea to the Buriats, that they sometimes lay by stores of it as money. In dry situations, this substance will remain a long time undeteriorated; and consequently on the steppe an accumulation of it is often thought a better investment than herds and flocks.

In the northern parts, the Buriats procure wood for fuel; but in the southern parts, and with the Mongols in the desert, this article is scarce, and they use instead sun-dried camels' dung, which they call *argols*, from a Tatar word which signifies the droppings of animals when dried and prepared for fuel.*

The Buriat implements for striking fire used to be preferred to European, and commanded a high price among the Russians. They are made of plates of the best tempered steel, from four to six inches long,

* The collecting, pounding, moulding, and drying of dung is, further south, an important branch of commerce. Argols are of four classes. In the first rank are the argols of goats and sheep, which make so fierce a fire that a bar of iron placed therein is soon brought to a white heat. The argols of camels constitute the second class; they burn easily, and throw out a fine flame, but the heat they give is less intense than that given by the preceding. The third class comprises the argols of the bovine species; these, when thoroughly dry, burn readily, and produce no smoke. Lastly come the argols of horses and other animals, which, not having

stitched to a bag for holding the tinder, the bag being of red leather, and tastefully ornamented with silver and steel spangles. The English and Swedish matches have now driven them out of the Russian market.

The ordinary occupation of the Buriats is that of tending cattle, the number of their herds reminding one of the flocks of the Hebrew patriarchs. Mr. Stallybrass told me that, when he was living at Selenginsk, he knew rich Buriats to possess as many as 6,000 or 7,000 sheep, 2,000 head of horned cattle, and 200 horses; and Captain Cochrane mentions the case of the mother of a Buriat chief who possessed 40,000 sheep, 10,000 horses, and 3,000 horned cattle, besides a large property in furs. In a sparsely-populated country, therefore, a man's children are very useful in looking after his cattle; and since it is necessary to be constantly removing to fresh pastures, it will be understood that this state of things presented to the missionaries a double educational difficulty, namely, unwillingness on the part of the parents to lose their children's services, and their constant change of residence. The same difficulty besets those still who would carry on missionary and educational work among other wandering tribes of Siberia. The Buriats, in 1876, numbered 260,000—the largest of the native populations of Eastern Siberia. As yemstchiks we thought them livelier than the Russians, and there was a manly

undergone the process of rumination, present nothing but a mass of straw more or less triturated. They are soon consumed, but are useful for lighting a fire. This fuel is called *kiseek* in Russia, and in the southern governments was the only kind available for the poorer inhabitants, wood being very scarce and dear. The discovery of coal, and the establishment of manufactories, has wrought a complete change in the means of heating in Ekaterinoslaf. Kiseek was made from the dung of cattle and sheep, laboriously trodden under foot by women, and then sun-dried.

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independence in their bearing, which easily accounted for the difficulty the Russians had at first in subjugating them. Moreover, they would seem not to be deficient in intellectual power, for the English missionaries taught some of them Latin, and had prepared an elementary work on geometry and trigonometry in the Buriat language. Baron Rosen also mentions that they play chess, having learnt it from the Chinese, and he says that the best player among his comrades, who were Russian officers, having on one occasion challenged a Buriat to a game, was beaten. The speech of the Buriats is a dialect of Mongol, rough and unsophisticated, with Manchu, Chinese, and Turkish corruptions. It is distinguished by its abundance of guttural and nasal sounds. Instead of true Mongolian letters they employ the Manchu alphabet, which is written in vertical columns from the top to the bottom of the page, the lines running from left to right. The only versions of the Scriptures in the Mongolian language are those of the Calmuck and Buriat dialects.

The religion of the Buriats is of three kinds: Shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Shamanism, more or less like that of the other tribes of Siberia, would appear to have been their old religion; and it still lingers most, I presume, in the northern parts of their country, which are farthest from Buddhist influence. Buddhism, however, holds sway over by far the greater portion of the people, and was originally imported from Thibet.*

* At Lhassa, the capital of Thibet, dwells the *Dalai Lama*, who is the head of the Buddhist religion; and though his followers acknowledge him to be mortal, they believe his soul to be an immediate emanation from the essence of their supreme deity, Buddha. In places where this worship prevails are found religious communities gathered round the temples

BURIAT LAMAS AND MONGOLIAN INTERPRETER.

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The lamas, or priests, are treated with great reverence, and every Buddhist Buriat desires that one of his family should follow the priestly calling. Hence it comes to pass that the lamas compose a sixth—some say a fifth—of the population. When in full dress they are clothed in scarlet, and shave their heads all over, and their large ears standing off from the skull give them a curious appearance. They are supposed to observe the strictest celibacy; hence Mr. Michie observes that it is a tender point with a lama to be asked how his wife and family are; but Mr. Erman points out that their celibacy has the most prejudicial consequences. The use of spirits is forbidden to them, lest excess "should disorder the brain of the student of the divine oracles, and corrupt the heart by the bad passions it might engender." The use of tobacco also is denied them, and that for one of the best of reasons against smoking, because "it is conducive to indolence, and tends to waste leisure hours which ought to be devoted to pursuits affording instruction as well as amusement."*

Besides their religious employments the lamas

dedicated to the rites of their faith, and monasteries, or, as they are called, *lamaseries*, containing the various orders of priests. It was one of these we visited at Cheelantoui. When the great lama dies, it is held that his spirit immediately enters the body of another human being, who thus becomes successor to all the rights and privileges held by his predecessor, and some little difficulty often occurs in discovering who may be the favoured individual; but as the priests are the chief actors in the scene, their search is generally successful. Commonly the spirit is recognized as having animated some new-born infant, who is at once taken to the religious establishment and educated by the lamas in the mysteries of their faith.

* The lamas are divided into four classes. Those of the first are occupied with the study of doctrine, and with the tenets and mysteries of their faith; those of the second with the regulation of certain religious rites and ceremonies; those of the third busy themselves in the study and direction of their worship; the fourth class study and practise medicine,

engage in various branches of ordinary industry, especially in the manufacture of their own wearing apparel and their ecclesiastical furniture. A lama labours under one inconvenience, in that he is not allowed to kill anything, through fear that what he slaughters may contain the soul of a relative, or possibly that of the divine Buddha. Even when he is annoyed, says Mr. Knox, by fleas or similar creeping things, with which their bodies are often thickly populated, he must bear his infliction until patience is thoroughly exhausted. He may then call in an unsanctified friend, and place himself and his garments under thorough examination. So again, in connection with this difficulty about killing, Captain Shepherd relates an instance in which the lamas did their best to keep the law and yet evade it at the same time. The captain, in crossing the desert, had bought a sheep, and was somewhat in difficulty as to how the animal should be slaughtered. There were four in the party. The late owner was a lama, and could not take life; so was the guide; the captain was unwilling to turn butcher, and his Chinese servant did not know how. The captain would have shot the animal, but the owner protested. One of the lamas, therefore, took the sheep aside, threw it down, tied its legs, explained to the Chinaman the trick, and lent his own knife for the deed to be done, after which he turned and walked quickly to a distance. When the sheep was once killed, the lamas soon cut it up, had it cooked, and, of course, helped to eat it.

in which it would appear that some of them attain eminence, for when we arrived at Kiakhta we found Mr. Tokmakoff, on account of his health, was gone to Urga, the Mongolian capital, to be near a native doctor.

The Buddhist books teach the people that they will attain the highest wisdom if they honour the lama; that the sun itself rises *only* that honour may be rendered to the lamas; and that persons obtain pardon for the most enormous sins by showing them respect. Any offence against a lama annihilates the merit acquired by a thousand generations. Whosoever shows any contempt for these personages is said to be punished by accident, sickness, and all kinds of misfortunes, and so forth. One of their Siberian monasteries, or lamaseries, with a temple, is at Turgutu, midway between Verchne Udinsk and Chita; and I think I heard of schools there. I have said that we visited a lamasery at Cheelantoui. It was a small one, consisting of about half-a-dozen houses, one of which was the temple, where, if I mistake not, they worship daily at sunset, but into which, unfortunately, we could not enter, as the chief was absent. There were younger lamas present, some of them mere boys; but they either could not or would not understand us, and seemed afraid to grant favours. We saw, however, the praying machine. It consisted of an upright cylinder, from two to three feet high, and perhaps two feet in diameter. It was fixed on a pivot, and could be turned by a rope, to be pulled by the devotee, who secured by each revolution some thousands of invocations to Buddha. Sometimes these machines are turned by mechanical power, like a wind or water mill. This, of course, is easier, and as the quantity of prayer is more important than the quality, the latter method saves much trouble, and is popular.*

* Inside the cylinder is placed the oft-used prayer of the Buddhist, "*Om mani padme houm*," of which a Russian near the monastery said

The Buriats, who are Buddhists, have temples, ritual, an order of priests, and a considerable literature. With a religion so developed, it will not be difficult to account for its overcoming the older Shamanistic creed, nor will it be hard to understand what was told us by the Ispravnik of Selenginsk,—that of the two religions among the Buriats, with whom the Russian missionaries come in contact, they find the conversion of the Shaman Buriats tolerably easy, but the Buddhists are greatly opposed to Christianity.

We now come to that part of the Buriat people who are Christian. Perhaps it was an inquiry into the false religion of Buddha, under which so many millions of the human race are deluded, or perchance only a timid belief in the power of their own creed, that led our early travellers in Siberia, with one exception, to look coldly and unbelievingly on the efforts of the English mission to the Buriats; in connection with which the thought arises for how little the heathen world would have to thank the Christianity

the meaning was *Gospodi pomilui,—i.e.,* "Lord, have mercy upon us!" Its real meaning, however, does not appear to be very clear. Klaproth understood it to mean, "*O the gem in the lotus. Amen!*" and Huc paraphrases it into, "*O that I may obtain perfection, and be absorbed in Buddha. Amen.*" The lamas assert that the doctrine contained in the marvellous words is immense, and that the whole life of man is insufficient to measure its depth and extent. At Lhassa the formula is heard from every mouth—is everywhere visible in the streets, in the interior of the houses, and on every flag and streamer floating over the buildings, printed in Tatar and Thibetan characters. Certain rich and zealous Buddhists even entertain, at their own expense, companies of lamas for the propagation of the *mani;* and these strange missionaries, chisel and hammer in hand, traverse field, mountain, and desert to engrave the sacred formula on the stones and rocks they encounter in their path. There was a stone with inscriptions, in the temple yard at Cheelantoui; and I found other stones, bearing the *mani*, on the supposed site of a temple at Tyr, on the Lower Amur.

of England, if there were not some who take a more believing view than the travellers who go abroad, looking in a superficial way at what is being done, or sometimes not looking at all, and then coming home to pronounce missions a failure or an imposture. Captain Cochrane, for instance, speaking of the missionaries at Selenginsk, goes so far as to say, "For my own part, so small are my hopes of their success, that I do not expect any one Buriat will be really and truly converted." *

I have shown, however, that the English missionaries laid a solid foundation, taught several scholars, and translated the Scriptures, which translation the Russian missionaries have in their hands to-day; and whatever may have been the success or failures of the English, it certainly cannot be said of the Russian missionaries that they have no converts, for, such as they are, they count them by thousands.

The Ispravnik at Selenginsk told me there were about 40 men engaged in nine districts in the Russian

* He does, indeed, afterwards allow that what is impossible with man is possible with God; but goes on to insinuate that the missionaries knew of the uselessness of their work, but that they had "too comfortable a berth to be given up," and then he thinks, forsooth, that justice is not done to the people of England in so squandering money, etc., etc. Mr. Atkinson contented himself with a passing compliment to the character of the missionaries, and said that they were unable to make converts among the Buriats; whilst Mr. Hill, who visited Selenginsk, records that, "notwithstanding all their labours, not a single Buriat had been converted by them"; and then he quotes the testimony of a lady living on the spot, who said, "The missions only failed because the undertaking was beyond the power of man to accomplish unaided by more than his own genius. The missionaries had all the zeal and perseverance of the Apostles, but they wanted their power of working miracles, or the aid of some such startling circumstances as the history of religious revolutions has often presented to us, and without which all efforts at all times to convert the Buriats will be equally fruitless."

mission to the Buriats, though I am not aware whether some of them are not also parish priests. We called upon a priest at Verchne Udinsk to ask about the matter, and sold him some New Testaments and Gospels. He informed us that there were 15 mission stations among them, and that on the eastern side of Lake Baikal there were baptized annually about 300 Buriats, and on the western side more than 1,000. This was confirmed by the missionary upon whom we called further on, and it agrees tolerably with the general almanack of 1878, in which it is stated that in the Irkutsk diocese there were baptized, in the previous year, 1,505 of both sexes, including four Buriat lamas; though the number of converts given for the Trans-Baikal diocese for that year amounted to only 52, there being one lama to every 20 persons.

We had brought with us a number of copies of the Buriat Scriptures. Some of these we left at Irkutsk, some with the Ispravniks of Selenginsk and Troitzkosavsk, and some for the lamasery of Cheelantoui. Others we left at Chita with a view to spreading them over the district, as well as placing them in the prisons. I asked the Ispravnik at Selenginsk what he thought the lamas would do with the books. He said he thought they would first read them and then destroy them; but Mr. Stallybrass, on my return, was of opinion that they were likely to be deterred from destroying them by a feeling that they were holy books. In any case we gave the copies we had brought, and thus endeavoured to do what little we could for this interesting people, who, I doubt not, will gradually be absorbed into the Russian Church.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SIBERIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS.

The Za-Baikal a natural prison.—"Decembrists" of 1825.—Misapprehensions respecting political prisoners.—The story of Elizabeth.—Vindictive foreign writers.—Palpable misstatements.—Misleading information.—Dostoyeffsky's "Buried Alive."—Rosen's "Russian Conspirators."—Present condition of political prisoners.—Testimony of Poles.—Treatment of an attempted regicide.—The number of "politicals" exaggerated.—Calculations concerning them.—Their mode of transport.—Paucity of statistics accounted for.

THE Trans-Baikal province, east of the "Holy Sea," was, until within the past 30 years, a *cul-de-sac*, to which the gravest of political offenders were commonly deported. It lay outside the two great routes of Siberian travel. The traveller to the Pacific, by way of the Lena, left the province on his right; the merchant going to Kiakhta passed it on his left. There was, indeed, a road running through the province, but it might be said to lead to nowhere. It was, moreover, a country from which a prisoner found it difficult to escape. If he went to the north he came to enormous forests, in which, though he might find berries in summer, he could not live in winter. Southwards he was hemmed in by the Mongolian desert. The road eastwards brought him to a river, down which, if he could float 2,000 miles and escape the jealous Chinese, he might reach the Pacific;

or, again, if he turned to the west, and rounded or crossed the Baikal lake, he was likely to be caught in the neighbourhood of Irkutsk; and lastly, in whatever direction he went, there was a price on his head that could be claimed by any Buriat who chose to make him his prisoner, and bring him to the authorities either dead or alive.

There was also another reason, which, in the eyes of the Government, made the Za-Baikal a suitable place in which to confine the worst offenders; for the province is rich in silver and gold, and gems are found in its mountains. It provided a place, therefore, where they could segregate disturbing elements of society, exact enforced labour from their convicts, and to some extent mitigate the cost of keeping them by the value of the minerals obtained. Consequently "the silver-mines of Nertchinsk" has long been an expression, at the mention of which the ears of Russians tingle; and so it was with the prisons of Chita and Petrovski,—connected in their minds with political exiles, and especially with certain of them called "Decembrists," who in December 1825 tried to raise revolt among the soldiers of Nicolas, and deprive him of his throne.

The mines of Nertchinsk and Kara will be treated of in subsequent chapters. I purpose to speak in this, not of political exiles with their families and descendants generally, but of the condition of *political prisoners*, past and present, and of certain buildings in which some of them have been confined. That there exists a great deal of exaggeration and misapprehension in England, on the Continent, and in America respecting the number, misery, and degradation of

Russian political prisoners I am persuaded; nor is this hard to account for if regard be had to the character of the books which profess to give information upon the subject.

Let us begin, for instance, with the touching story of "Elizabeth; or, the Exiles of Siberia," by Madame de Cottin, to whose work many English persons are indebted for nearly all they know of Siberia. The book so far resembles the truth that, in 1799, a young girl of 18, the only daughter of a Russian exiled officer, Proscovie Lopouloff, formed the project of asking forgiveness for her parents, for which purpose she left Ischim, near Tobolsk, with a few roubles in her pocket, walked in 18 months 2,000 miles to the capital, was presented, and obtained her petition, the real account of which is told by Xavier de Maistre in "La Jeune Sibérienne." But Madame de Cottin imported a love-match into the story, and produced one of the most popular books of her day, depicting, however, a narrative for which she had to rely largely upon her imagination for many details. She paints a picture of Siberian exile life very different from anything I ever heard, saw, or read of in the country itself. Her mistakes, however, were the mistakes such as any foreign author might easily commit in laying the scene of a story in a country then almost unknown.

Less excuse can be made for later writers (some of them escaped or released convicts), who, trading upon the credulity and ignorance of the public, have retailed and garnished accounts of horrible severities, which they neither profess to have witnessed, nor attempt to support by adequate testimony. In one of these

books, by Alexander Hertzen, published in 1855, the author naïvely says in the preface that, having written in London a work, entitled "Prison and Exile," which met with success, he decided to write another volume. He accordingly did so, and had the audacity to call it "My Exile in Siberia"; whereas, on reading the book, we find that he was not exiled to Siberia at all, but simply banished for awhile to Perm, which is in Russia in Europe! Again we have, in De Lagny's "Knout and the Russians," published in 1854, a tirade against Russia all through, in which words bad enough can hardly be found to vilify its army, navy, nobility, and clergy; whilst in the following year was published "Recollections of Russia by a German Nobleman," in which he states that, for prisoners, water was drawn up green from the filthiest canal in Petersburg; and, as if that were too little, he adds that, after being knouted, the prisoners had to drink their own blood!

The books quoted thus far are mostly foreign productions, which have been translated into English; but within the past three years has been published in London a book called "The Russians of To-day," by the author of "The Member for Paris," and dedicated to the Duke of Sutherland, which gives the following account of a Russian prison (page 86):—

"A Russian gaol is not built on any wasteful plan of keeping prisoners warm and comfortable. A black, mouldy house, situate in one of the slums of the town, it is guarded by a dozen corp-headed soldiers, and has a painted escutcheon with the Imperial double-headed eagle over the gate. There is a whipping-post in the

front yard. Thieves, murderers, boys, lunatics, women, are all huddled together in a room of foul stenches, warmed by a stove, and the only food served out to them is a pound of black bread in the morning, and a mess of rancid soup at mid-day. The sexes are separated at night."

Now as there will appear to be a great difference between this account and what has been stated in my chapters on Siberian prisons, I think it only right to say that I have visited Russian houses of detention from the White Sea in the north to the Black Sea and the Persian frontier in the south, and from Warsaw in the west to the Pacific in the east, but have never yet seen a Russian prison such as fairly answers to the description given above. My experience would place prisons in the suburbs rather than the "slums" of towns; and as for their atmosphere, I may safely say that the air I breathed in the worst Russian prison was incomparably better than that I had temporarily to endure in some of the peasants' houses, or which may be inhaled in many of the post-houses. The "one pound of black bread" should be multiplied by two and a half or three, and in some cases *four;* and as for "the whipping-post," I have seen such a thing in English and in American prisons, but not in Russia. The "*kobyla*," or "mare," used in flogging with the "*plète*" in *Siberia*, will be described further on; and I do not deny that in Russia there may be *some* instrument to which those to be birched are fastened, but I have never seen one, though I have usually made a point of asking concerning the mode of corporal punishment.

Again, the same author says (page 217):—

"The convicts are forwarded to Siberia in convoys, which start at the commencement of spring, just after the snows have melted and left the ground dry. They perform the *whole* journey on foot, escorted by *mounted* Cossacks, who are armed with pistols, *lances*, and long *whips;* and behind them jolt a long string of springless tumbrils, to carry those who fall lame or ill on the way. The start is *always* made in the night, and care is taken that the convoys shall only pass through the towns on their road *after dark*. Each man is dressed in a grey kaftan, having a *brass numbered plate* fastened to the *breast*, *knee* boots, and a *sheepskin* bonnet. He carries a *rug* strapped to his back, a mess-tin, and a wooden spoon at his girdle. The women have black cloaks with hoods, and march in gangs by *themselves*, with an escort of soldiers like the men, and two or three female *warders*, who travel in carts.

"In leaving large cities like Petersburg, *all* the prisoners are chained with their hands *behind their backs;* but their fetters are removed outside the city, except in the case of men who have been marked as dangerous. These have to wear leg-chains of 4 lbs. weight all the way; and some of the more desperate ones are yoked by threes to a *beam of wood*, which rests on their shoulders, and is fastened to their necks by iron collars."

The author then goes on to say that "Nihilist conspirators, patriotic Poles, and young student girls, are all mixed up, and tramp together with the criminals."

The words I have italicised (of which there are 23 in 26 lines) involve, in many cases, palpable misstatements. In others they are blunders, or are, at all events, open to serious question. As in the case of

Madame de Cottin (only with less innocence), a very free rein has been here given to the imagination. The avoiding of towns by day, the brass plate on the breast (instead of a piece of yellow *cloth* on the *back*), the accompanying female warders, and the chaining of men's hands behind their backs, are *blunders* utterly inexcusable; and as for the mounted Cossacks with whips, and the "beams of wood" on some of the exiles' necks—*if* the Cossacks were *mounted*, they would naturally have whips as part of their accoutrements, as they do even when riding behind the carriage of the Emperor, but the "beam of wood" is a pure invention. I never saw, heard, or read of such an instrument. Upon these last two points, however, to correct my own opinion if wrong, I spoke to an Englishman living in a town through which pass all the Siberian exiles. He has lived there many years, and has seen exiles from Perm to Kiakhta, and under all conditions. He tells me, however, that he *never* saw this wooden collar, and never saw soldiers with whips to conduct exiles; and he added, further, that he had never witnessed them using exiles improperly or unfairly. Thus it will be seen that some of the information offered to the public respecting Russian exiles is open to more than suspicion of grave misrepresentation.

But there is yet a third class of books which, in detailing past horrors, leads public opinion astray, not so much by saying what is absolutely untrue, as by omitting to point out that since the horrors they relate were enacted, the law has been altered, and that they are now a thing of the past. Englishmen would think themselves very unfairly dealt with if a foreigner, having seen an old pair of stocks in an English village, appealed

to this as proof that persons are still exposed therein; or if he hunted up stories of Tyburn, with accounts of gibbeted felons hung, drawn, and quartered, or pilloried criminals with slit noses and cropped ears, and then represented this as the existing state of things, or left his readers so to infer. This would be very similar to the treatment Russia receives at the hands of prejudiced and careless writers now-a-days, as will be seen more fully hereafter when we speak of the mines.

To keep, however, for the present, to books about prisons, and to mention one more which has appeared in English dress during the present year—namely, Dostoyeffsky's "Buried Alive; or, Ten Years' Penal Servitude in Siberia," to which I naturally turned with interest as it was written by a Russian. I was struck at the outset with the significant fact that the reader is not properly informed as to places and dates. The introduction sets forth that a certain Alexander Petrovitch Goryantchikoff died, after whose death there was found among his papers a bundle of manuscripts, which the editor, Feodor Dostoyeffsky, thought would interest the public. But scarcely a word is dropped to inform the reader when the events referred to took place, and he is left to form the very natural conclusion that he is reading of things as they now exist. My suspicions being aroused, I put on my best critical spectacles to discover, if possible, *where* the events happened, and *when*. The writer mentions having been in Tobolsk, and says that his prison was near the banks of the Irtish. Now there was, and perhaps is, a prison on the banks of the Irtish at Tara, the same from which Rufin Pietrowski made his escape; and at first I was disposed to think this was the place

of Goryantchikoff's captivity, but two subsequent allusions gave me additional light: one, that in the prison was a Jew who went out in the town to a *synagogue;* and another, that on some prisoners running away the *Governor-General* was told of it. Now, assuming that the Governor-General was living in the town, then the only prison situate on the banks of the Irtish, in a town with a synagogue and the residence of a Governor-General, would be Omsk, and here accordingly I adjudged my man as to his *place.* Then as for the *date.* The writer speaks of prisoners' chains made of "four iron rods, the size of the finger, connected by three rings and worn under the trousers." I saw none like these. All we saw had small *links,* and hence I assumed that the chains described must have been of an old-fashioned pattern of former days, and I have since learnt that chains such as the man describes were seen on a prisoner going to the Caucasus in 1842. Next he speaks a good deal of flogging, and mentions the running of a prisoner down "the green lane," that is, between two rows of soldiers, each of whom gave the culprit a stroke with a stick. But this method of punishment has long been abolished in Russia; and, finally, the writer, when speaking of his conversation with a fellow-prisoner, happens to use this sentence: "I explained to him Napoleon's position, adding that he might, perhaps, some day become Emperor of the French." Taking, therefore, these three *data,* that Napoleon became Emperor in 1851, that the flogging of the description mentioned was abolished not later than 1860, and the old pattern of the chains, I came to the conclusion that the story must represent events at

least 30 years old; and I have since heard that it was about as long ago the book appeared in Russia. Now, of course, the translation might not have sold so well had readers been informed that it treats of a state of things more than a quarter of a century old; yet, no doubt, so candid a statement would have prevented many from forming false opinions respecting the present state of Siberian prisons.*

But Goryantchikoff's, it should be remembered, is a picture of a convict prison for *criminals*, and not for *political* prisoners, who are treated as a class by themselves,—so much so that they are sent to Siberia, not usually walking, under the charge of Cossacks, but driving furiously under guard of gendarmes; and if

* Let me not fail to add, however, that the whole tone of Dostoyeffsky's book is far above that of the vindictive class of writers, some of whom have been alluded to. It gives an inner view of prison life, such as no inspector, or philanthropist, or person visiting prisons as I did, could furnish. Some of this writer's statements, indeed, would hardly tally with my own experience, as, for instance, that they had the bath *seldom*, whereas I found it the rule once a fortnight, and at Tiumen and Tomsk once a week; above all, the statement that prisoners were thrashed if found sleeping on their backs, or the left side instead of the right; also what he says of thrashing generally, to which I shall allude hereafter. But I have to thank Alexander Goryantchikoff for his life-like pictures, many of which illustrate scraps of information I received concerning the Siberian prison world—such, for instance, as the various occupations carried on in secret among the convicts, one being a pawnbroker, another a *vodka* seller, others smugglers of spirits into the prison, the card-playing at night, the exchanging of their names and punishments, and the horrible language and fighting and quarrelling of the prisoners. In these things I make no doubt that "Buried Alive" gives a fairly accurate picture of things as they were, and in some cases still are, perhaps, among such prisoners as those with whom the lot of Goryantchikoff (himself a murderer) was cast. Further light also is thrown upon the interior of prison life in Siberia by the papers of M. Andreoli in *La Revue Moderne* for 1868, in which he speaks of the tricks and vices of both prisoners and officials, and of the evil effects of the gang system. A great deal of this is inevitable where a number of the most desperate felons are herded together.

they need to lodge at an ordinary prison, they are kept in special rooms, and so jealously watched that frequently I was not allowed to approach the inspection hole so much as to look at them. It may be that when they reach their destination they have, in some cases, to work outdoors in company with criminals. I think I met one case of this at Kara, but even he, in the prison, was kept apart.

Probably the best, and, as far as I know, the only book in English which gives the description by an eye-witness of life in a *political* prison is "Russian Conspirators in Siberia," by Baron R(osen). He relates his taking part in the attempt to incite the soldiers to revolt on the accession of Nicolas in 1825, and how he was condemned with 120 comrades, large numbers of whom were counts, barons, princes, and some of the very flower of the Russian nobility. About 30 were at once transported to Chita. There they remained until a new prison was built expressly to contain them all at Petrovski, near Verchne Udinsk, at which place are the ironworks already alluded to. In these two places of confinement the Baron spent six years. I do not remember that he ever speaks of one of his comrades being thrashed. The Russian law, even in those days, held exempt from corporal punishments every noble, not only during his trial, but after his condemnation. The wearing of chains was included among corporal punishments, and it was forbidden to put them on nobles going into exile; but the law appears to have been set aside in the case of some of the Decembrists. The Baron describes their labour as that of digging and grinding corn in hand-mills. One of their first occupations was to dig the founda-

tions for their new prison. "Every day," the Baron writes, "except Sundays and holy days, the non-commissioned officer on guard entered early in the morning with the call of 'Gentlemen, to work!' In general we set out with songs on our lips and energy in our hearts; no constraint was used towards us." He gives likewise a vivid picture of their amusements and their studies. Playing-cards they might have had through the warders, but they wisely passed their word to each other not to allow card-playing, in order to prevent any cause of unpleasantness or dissension. Chess was their sole amusement between the time of work and sleep, and they formed among themselves a company of singers, which cheered many a sad hour. Some of them endeavoured, by study, further to improve their minds. One learnt not only Latin and Greek, but also eight modern languages; and it says much for the high education of the prisoners that this proficient found an instructor in each of the languages among his comrades, one of whom was still living, not many years ago, at Petrovsky Zavod, and lent my informant several books from what was the Decembrist library. They had, too, a room in which they practised the piano, the flute, the flageolet, the violin, and guitar. The most touching part of the book, however, recounts the arrival of some of the prisoners' wives. Every effort short of absolute denial had been employed to prevent these noble ladies from expatriating themselves. Their heroic determination wrung tears from the eyes of the officials who had in vain dissuaded them. These ladies were compelled to resign their titles, and were warned that they would not be permitted to return. Several of them, notwithstanding,

gave up all to be allowed to join their husbands, and in so doing covered their names with undying lustre in the annals of Russian history. They were allowed to live with or near their husbands, and several had children, two of whom—a lady and a gentleman—I have met in Europe. The Baron's book nowhere stoops to invective or misrepresentation; on the contrary, he acknowledges "there was reason enough for our having been treated thus"; but at the same time he tells a sad story, which is all the more touching because told so calmly, of what he and his comrades suffered. He was at length allowed to return to his home in Esthonia, in 1839, after 14 years' imprisonment and exile. About 500 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, I am told, were sent to Omsk and different places, where they were by far less well treated than their superior officers under whom they had rebelled.*

I have thus spoken of the political or State prison at Petrovski, which, as far as I know, is the only building there has ever been in Siberia that could with propriety be called a State prison for political offenders. It was burnt down many years ago, and

* I have been favoured with a few particulars from an unpublished manuscript, written by a Decembrist prisoner for the use of his wife and children. He describes his cell at the fortress in Petersburg as small, dirty, and dark; and speaks of a poor and scanty diet, adding, "C'était l'Empereur, qui, sur le rapport du comité d'enquête prescrivait, le régime diétique ainsi que la dure aggravation d'une détention penible." He had to leave Petersburg, and many of his comrades with him, in the middle of the night, in chains (though a noble), and was not allowed to bid his mother good-bye, though she was in the next room to him at the post-station. They left in a *telega*, travelling *viâ* Jaroslav, Kostroma, Viatka, Ekaterineburg, Omsk, etc., and reached Irkutsk in 24 days. At Chita they were kindly treated by the governor of the prison and attendants, and later on, when allowed to colonize at Irkutsk and Tobolsk, suffered no hardships, excepting petty restrictions and vexations.

has not been rebuilt. Of the prison at Chita, and the accommodation for political prisoners at Kara, mention will be made hereafter. Meanwhile it should be borne in mind we have been speaking of events which happened about half a century ago.

We now pass from the condition of political prisoners as they *were* to treat of political prisoners as they *are*. I shall speak of those with whom I was brought in contact and with whom I conversed, and will put the worst case first. It is that of a Pole, who was concerned in the insurrection of 1863, at which time he was a student for the Roman priesthood, and, under cover of his clerical garb, had busied himself in procuring arms and provisions for the Polish rebels. On the suppression of the insurrection he fled from the country, but was foolish enough to return, six years afterwards, by permission, he said, of the Emperor; and within three days was taken, and, without trial, sent to a prison at Oriel for a year. After this he was sent to Irkutsk, and there learned that he was condemned for eight years to the mines, at which he arrived in 1871, having been a year on the route from Tiumen. He had 20 Polish companion exiles, some of whom were in irons, though his clerical character saved him from this degradation. The Polish party travelled by themselves as far as Tobolsk, beyond which they were sometimes compelled to walk and lodge with criminal prisoners, who robbed my informant of 300 roubles, which his mother had sewn at the back of his coat collar. He complained that some of the prison officers were great despots; in illustration of which he stated how, whilst they were at Nijni Udinsk, some of the prisoners having escaped at

night, the governor of the jail procured rods from the neighbouring woods and birched the rest of them, I suppose on the ground of aiding and abetting the escape of the others. The 21 Poles, however, were not in the ward from which the escape was made, and this they urged, but apparently to no purpose, for the governor seemed to have been enraged beyond bounds, and in some cases to have used, not only rods, but the plète and clubs. My informant declared that of the 300 Russians and 21 Poles thus treated, 17 subsequently died, though he could not give me any satisfactory evidence as to how, after leaving the place, he got this information; but the affair must have been serious (though abnormal), for, on arriving at Irkutsk they presented a petition to the governor, an inquiry was instituted (especially as regards the Poles), and the violent prison official was telegraphed for, and himself incarcerated, though how punished my informant did not know. He also complained that one of his companions was badly treated on the road, being lame, and yet made to hurry along

When, however, the Polish cleric arrived at the mines, he did not appear to have once worked in them, as the chief made him his cook, exchanged his prison allowance for five roubles a month, and fed and lodged him thus for six years, after which the remaining two years were remitted on the score of good conduct. He was afterwards located in a small village in the Za-Baikal, but had obtained permission to live elsewhere, and when I met him he was respectably dressed, and apparently earning a good livelihood. Thus my informant's *gravamina*, as regarded himself, were not so heavy as it might have been feared. He said, indeed,

that four or five letters reached him at the mines, informing him that money was enclosed, which he never received.

He had more to say of the way in which some of his fellow-prisoners were treated, to which I shall allude when speaking hereafter of the mines.*

I did, it is true, meet another Pole who complained, though I do not know whether he was a political or a criminal offender, but I have already referred to him and the information he gave me respecting the prison at Irkutsk. There was a third Pole, also a student, banished after the insurrection of 1863, whom we met in the streets of Atchinsk, who looked very gloomy, and spoke in a very dispirited and dissatisfied manner; but he was free, having his wife and children with him, and he named no one particular cause of complaint. Still, I have mentioned these cases fully, though they seem somewhat opposed to the opinion I have stated, that there exists a great deal of misapprehension respecting the number, misery, and degradation of Russian political prisoners.

The severest case of punishment of a political prisoner I met with was that of, I think, a Nihilist, at Kara, who had daily to go to work in the gold-mines; but, on returning, he had a room to himself, some of his own furniture, fittings, and books, one of which was on

* Perhaps I ought to add that this information was given me in French, which the Pole had not conversed in for a long time, and did not speak readily. It was given, too, with a good deal of bitter feeling, whilst I made notes of what was told me. As he looked on at my writing, and knew pretty well who I was, and what I was travelling for, I felt he might be exaggerating, and I therefore asked him pointedly whether all he had told me was true. He replied in the affirmative, and I therefore hand on the account to my readers, though, as will be seen later on, it was a much severer testimony than I received from political prisoners in general.

political economy. His wife lived in the neighbourhood, and could see him lawfully, and bring him food at frequent intervals; and it was not difficult for her to see him unlawfully, for just in front of his window passed the public road, where she could stand and talk to him with ease.

I met in Siberia one political prisoner whose case was more surprising, perhaps, than any I have mentioned. It was that of a man who had been concerned in one of the attempts upon the life of the late Emperor. He was sentenced to the mines, and no doubt popular imagination pictured him chained, and tormented to within an inch of his life; whereas I found him confined indeed, but only to the neighbourhood, and dressed, if I remember rightly, in a tweed suit, looking highly presentable, and engaged in a way that I purposely avoid naming, but which did not necessitate the soiling of his fingers. Again, I had two opportunities of speaking to upper-class prisoners in French, which the authorities accompanying me did not understand; therefore these men had no reason to fear speaking out plainly. One was a political prisoner; concerning the other I am not sure; but I asked them both whether they had any cause of complaint in the prison regimen. The first said the only thing he thought unjust was that he was not allowed to smoke, which one of my exile informants deems incredible, since at Nertchinsk, when, for insubordination, they were deprived of meat, milk, and tea, for weeks, they were still allowed to smoke, as a supposed preventive against scurvy. The man, moreover, in the neighbouring cell —a fat man—a defaulting post-master, a drunkard and a gambler, who would have made an admirable Falstaff,

was smoking, and I should not wonder if by this time the grievance is mended. The second man, a doctor, said that he had been taken about from place to place, and did not know his destination, though he thought it would be Irkutsk, but that he had nothing to complain of.

Supposing, then, that these instances throw any light upon the misery and alleged degradation of political prisoners, I have yet to offer some remarks upon their supposed numbers—that is, the average number banished annually at the time of my visit—for I do not profess here to deal with those sent into exile after the Polish insurrection of 1863, with their families and descendants, nor of Nihilists deported since the assassination of the late Emperor. Mr. Whyte, in his "Land Journey from Asia to Europe," says: "It is calculated that in Eastern Siberia alone there are at least from 30,000 to 40,000 *Polish political* exiles, but they are kept in different portions for fear of disturbances, a great many having to work in the mines." Now let us suppose for the moment that these figures are something like the truth, then let us add to this calculation for Eastern Siberia, whither are banished the gravest offenders, at least twice as many for Western Siberia, whither are sent those losing particular rights only; and this will give, say, 120,000 Polish political exiles in the whole country. Let us further suppose that they represent the surviving total of 30 years' deportations, not including, of course, their families and descendants. Then this gives a yearly influx to Siberia of 4,000 Polish *political* exiles! Now from statistics given me in Warsaw last autumn, taken from the report sent to the Emperor, it appeared that the

total number of Polish *criminal* prisoners sent to Siberia in the year I passed through (1879) was 898; and last year, up to September, the number, as I had it straight from the prison books, was 270. Supposing, then, the politicals to number one-tenth of the criminals (which I judge far too great a proportion), it would give less than one-fortieth of the numbers quoted by Mr. Whyte respecting Polish political exiles.

I base my opinion, however, mainly upon other calculations, such as these: the prisoners must sometimes be lodged, permanently or temporarily, as they go to their destinations. But it has been already stated that there is now no building in Siberia answering to a State prison, and further that political prisoners, when confined, are kept not only apart from criminals, but as far as possible from one another. I fail to see, then, where all these multitudes are to be properly lodged, as at Tiumen, for instance, whilst they wait for the arrival of the steamer, or at other prisons where they may have to stop, but in none of which we found more than a very few separate chambers—always less, I think, than 20. Again, another difficulty is presented by the possibilities of separate conveyance for so large a number. It is not very long since that 78 political exiles passed through Tiumen, a town where, in summer, from 500 to 700 criminals pass through weekly; but these 78 politicals excited such a commotion that there was a general "turn out" to look at them; and the manager of the steamboat was at his wits' end to know how properly to convey them; for political prisoners are not now sent, I am informed, in the common prisoners' barges. To give each man a cabin was impossible; to put two in a cabin was unlawful; and

so they compromised the matter by putting husbands and wives together. But, if a batch of 78 made all this commotion, what would the annual passing through of 4,000 *politicals* do?

Again, Kara, I was told, was a special place for political offenders, and I saw and heard of more there than in any other prison. They had, at the time of my visit, 2,458 prisoners of all sorts, all of whose crimes were given me duly tabulated, with the exception of 73, which came under the heading "*various*." Now, supposing all these 73 were political offenders (and I have not the least reason for thinking they were, but) even then the proportion of politicals would be only one-thirtieth of the criminals.

Once more: a recent correspondent of the *Gaulois* for 30th September, 1881, describing the last occasion on which he saw the exiled Tchernichewsky at Kadaya, near Nertchinsk, just after the news had been received of the assassination of President Lincoln, says, "At this time the number of (Russian?) political prisoners was not great; they might easily be counted. . . . I believe there were not 20 of them; if mistaken, I may certainly affirm there were not 50." This scrap of information has come to hand very opportunely, for I have reason to believe that it may be relied on, and Nertchinsk was the only other district for political prisoners concerning which, until a few days ago, I did not feel satisfactorily informed.

Lastly, the summer of 1879 was supposed to be a very heavy one for the transport of Nihilists and revolutionary offenders. It was just after one of the attempts on the late Emperor's life, and Petersburg was put under a military governor. The *Daily Telegraph*,

on the 2nd June, informed its readers, as I have said before, that "a large number of convicts were about to be despatched to Saghalien from Odessa, the service which provides for the ordinary transportation of criminals to Siberia being already overtaxed." We were therefore traversing Siberia at a time and under circumstances particularly favourable for knowing the real condition of things; and as we went along the only route by which these exiles could possibly travel to Eastern Siberia, it might have been expected that we should see or hear something of them. The numbers, however, with whom we were brought in contact on the outward journey could easily have been counted on our fingers; and if it should seem that, having started early in the season, we had travelled in advance of them, then my interpreter, who returned from the Amur, had the opportunity of meeting them, or hearing of them, as he went back. As a matter of fact, however, he met, between the Amur and the Urals, three special convoys only. The first contained one prisoner, who said he was going to Kara; the next consisted of seven vehicles, each of which contained a soldier on the box, and a gendarme at the side of the prisoner; and the third convoy consisted of 21 vehicles, each filled in like manner. Thus, excepting the 78, or the possible 73 just mentioned, the total number we met or *definitely* heard of all across Asia, both in going and returning, did not amount, I should think, to 50.

I write, then, under correction, and shall be glad to be set right if I am wrong; but I must now leave it to my readers to judge whether or not the considerations brought forward are such as to justify my opinion

respecting the number, degradation, and misery of political prisoners. I have few statistics on the point, from the fact that political offenders are treated as belonging to a special department, and are unconnected with the ordinary sources from which I obtained my figures. This I did not know until I had left European Russia, and hence my inability to give other than general reasons. My impression, therefore, is that the greater number of the political exiles either go to prison only for a short time, or not at all, and are then placed in villages and towns. They are then expected to get their living. (I have recently heard that, at the time of the burning of Krasnoiarsk, there were 40 living free in the town.)

This they do in a variety of ways. Some are teachers of languages, some are tradesmen, and some are photographers. We met, for instance, two exile photographers at Tobolsk. As strangers we had, of course, no means of identifying exiles from other people, though we were sometimes brought into contact with them, from the fact that many of the Poles speak French. Moreover, as the question of prison and exiles was, so to say, my speciality, I was always glad, when opportunity presented itself, to converse with them directly rather than get my information translated. A stranger, however, who believes every exile who calls himself a "political," may easily be misled. To be a "political" prisoner in Siberia is to be more or less of a gentleman, and many try thus to pass themselves off. Mr. Ashton Dilke, M.P., who travelled some years ago in Southern Siberia, and spoke Russian, has told me that, on asking gangs of convicts if they had any politicals or "gentlemen"

prisoners among them, they usually said "No"; and that, in the case of one man who imposed upon him and tried to palm himself off as a "political," the Governor showed Mr. Dilke the man's papers, which described him as a criminal, a thief, etc.

In Irkutsk I met an exile who told me he was a captain, and had been banished for a duel, which no doubt he thought a respectable crime; but, upon my repeating it to others who knew the man, they said he was a forger. Looking, however, at the political prisoners I saw in the separate rooms of the various prisons, at those with whom I came into personal contact, those pointed out to me, and those of whom mention was made as living in the towns through which we passed, I think that, if I had been commissioned to give a sovereign to each, 50 coins would have sufficed for the purpose. It is not pretended, of course, that a lover of statistics can or ought to attempt to build anything definite upon this statement; but, until proof is brought to the contrary, it may perhaps tend to modify what I deem the exaggerated and extravagant notions as to the number of Siberian *political* prisoners, and to show at least that they are not as "plentiful as blackberries."*

* Since this chapter has been in type my impressions have been strikingly confirmed by an official, high in the prison administration, who in reply to my written inquiries as to the number of political prisoners sent to Siberia during the last few years, replies that the deportation of political offenders came under the *prison* administration only in 1880, but that for the present year, 1881, the total number of political offenders of *all* kinds, sent to Siberia, is 72; which number, moreover, includes nearly 40 condemned to the mines during the years 1875-6-9-80, but who have been detained meanwhile in the central prisons of the Kharkof district. The year, therefore (up to November), of the Emperor's assassination has sent about 30 persons into exile.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FROM CHITA TO NERTCHINSK.

The Trans-Baikal province.—Books deposited with Governor.—Specimen letter of consignment.—Prisons and hospitals.—Governor's distribution of books.—Satisfactory results.—Journey from Chita.—Buriat *Obos*.—Russian emigrants.—Salutations.—Approach to Nertchinsk.—Its mineral treasures.

THE Trans-Baikal province is bounded on the south and east by Chinese territory, on the west by Lake Baikal, and on the north by the province of Yakutsk. It measures 830 miles from east to west, and 460 miles from north to south; its entire area covering about 240,000 square miles. It is thus not quite so large as Austria.*

Before leaving the capital, Chita, we deposited with the Governor enough books for his prisons and hospitals; and since this region was so important, from my point of view, in regard to its penal establishments, and our efforts, moreover, here met with such good

* The surface is mountainous; one range, the Yablonoi, running from north to south, is the watershed of numerous rivers. The streams from the western slopes drain into Lake Baikal; the largest one towards the north, the Vitim, finds its way to the Lena, whilst the remainder run into the Argun, which flows at the south of the province and into the Ingoda and Onon, which form the Shilka. The population of the government is 430,000, of which the town inhabitants number only 4 per cent. In 1867 the population was 380,000, of whom there were 400 hereditary nobles, 1,000 personally noble, 1,700 ecclesiastical persons, 11,000 townspeople, 109,000 rural inhabitants, 4,000 military, 9 foreigners, and 164,000

success, I shall give the substance of a letter which I wrote to the Governor (in French), and which is a fair specimen of similar letters written to the other Governors throughout Siberia :—

"To His Excellency the Governor of ———.

"Sir,—

"I have the honour to beg your acceptance of — boxes of books containing — large New Testaments, — small New Testaments, — Gospels, — Psalms, — New Testaments in French, German, Polish, Tatar, and Buriat, — copies of the *Rooski Rabotchi*, — wall-pictures, and — tracts. Will your Excellency do me the favour to accept them for the prisons, hospitals, poor-houses, and schools of the government of ———? I shall be thankful if the copies of the *Rooski Rabotchi* (Russian Workman) and the tracts may be given to the children in schools to be taken to their homes, and thus distributed as much as possible among the people. As for the books, I wish that they should remain in the rooms (not in the libraries) of the prisons, hospitals, etc. If the chief of each room may be made responsible for the books as for the other property of the prisons, etc., I shall be glad; but in any case I wish that the books may be had without asking for them from the library. I hope

natives. The present population is quoted as 10,000 less than that given by the Almanack for 1875, which diminution probably arises from emigration to the region of the Amur, and from the Government sending fewer exiles here than formerly. There were throughout the government, in the year 1875, about 3,000 marriages, 16,000 births, and 12,000 deaths. The province is divided into seven uyezds; and among its principal towns, besides the capital, are Verchne Udinsk, Selenginsk, and Troitzkosavsk, on or near the Selenga, Barguzin, near the Baikal, and Nertchinsk, to all of which we went with the exception of Barguzin. Barguzin is the chief town of the district, but is not otherwise remarkable.

with your assistance in the government of ——— to place a New Testament or a copy of the Gospels in *every* room of *every* prison and hospital throughout Siberia; and I shall be very thankful if I may hear from you, at my English address, how the distribution has been made, because I shall probably send an account of my tour to the authorities at St. Petersburg.

"I have the honour to be, etc., etc., etc."

The Governor of the Trans-Baikal province, M. Pedachenko, spoke of his four large hospitals and 10 smaller, or occasional hospitals. He told us also that he had in his government four permanent prisons, besides those at the mines, namely, at Nertchinsk, Troitzkosavsk, Verchne Udinsk, and Chita, the last three of which we saw. The number of prisoners was given us as about 150 each at Chita and Nertchinsk.* M. Pedachenko was good enough to promise that a small shelf should be put up in each room (under the *ikon* I suggested), on which the books might rest when not in use; and this promise he carried out.†

I have dwelt particularly on what we were able to distribute in the Za-Baikal for two reasons; first, because the letter of the Governor, together with our own

* We had deposited with the Ispravniks of Verchne Udinsk and Troitzkosavsk Russian New Testaments, Tatar Gospels, and Buriat Scriptures for the prisons and for the Troitzkosavsk poor-house, which last, as far as I remember, was the only one of this kind we heard of during our tour, unless it were at Perm, and, perhaps, Barnaul. In addition to these the Governor at Chita accepted 25 wall-pictures of the Prodigal Son, 12 Tatar Gospels, 14 large Russian New Testaments, 50 small ones, 60 Russian Gospels, 20 Psalms, 3 New Testaments in Polish, French, and German, 38 Buriat portions, 75 copies of the *Russian Workman*, and 200 tracts.

† At a further stage of my journey I had the opportunity of sending additional books to M. Pedachenko, and on the following February 4th I received in England the following letter:—

observations, give an insight into the number of prisons existing in this province, which of all others was that reserved for the worst of exiles; and, secondly, because

TCHITA, *le* 12 *Decembre*, 1879.

MONSIEUR,—Je me fais un plaisir de vous faire savoir, que j'ai reçu votre lettre du 9 Juillet de même que les livres et les brochures religieuses, qui ont été tous distribués.

A *Kara:* Dans les prisons, les hôpitaux, et l'établissement de charité, d' Alexandre :—

13 Papiers pour les murailles, 43 Petits Evangiles,
7 Grands Evangiles, 8 Psaumes,
3 Nouveaux Testaments Polonais, Français, Allemands,
29 Brochures *Rouski Rabotchi*, 60 Différentes brochures,
22 Anciens Testaments Mongols.

A *Algatche:* Dans les prisons et les hôpitaux :—

3 Papiers pours les murailles, 2 Psaumes,
2 Grands Evangiles, 9 *Rouski Rabotchi*,
13 Petits Evangiles, 15 Brochures religieuses.

A *Nertchinsk:* Dans l' hôpital et la prison :—

2 Papiers pours les murailles, 2 Psaumes,
1 Grand Evangile, 9 *Rouski Rabotchi*,
13 Petits Evangiles, 9 Brochures religieuses,
4 Anciens Testaments Mongols.

A *Tchita:* Dans la prison :—

2 Papiers pour les murailles, 13 Psaumes,
1 Grand Evangile, 10 *Rouski Rabotchi*,
14 Petits Evangiles, 10 Brochures religieuses,
4 Anciens Testaments Mongols.

Pour les *Forçats de Nertchinsk:*—

3 Papiers pour les murailles,
2 Grands Evangiles, 15 *Rouski Rabotchi*,
13 Petits Evangiles, 9 Brochures religieuses,
2 Psaumes, 4 Anciens Testaments Mongols.

A l' hôpital de *Strétinsk:*—

2 Papiers pour les murailles, 1 Ancien Testament Tatare.
3 Brochures religieuses,

D' après votre désir, Monsieur, les livres distribués dans les prisons et les hôpitaux sont placés sur des tablettes, afin qu'on puisse s'en servir en tout temps. Les serviteurs sont chargés de les tenir en ordre.

Recevez, Monsieur, mes plus sincères remerciements pour votre précieuse offrande,

J'ai l' honneur d' être,
Votre très humble serviteur,
(Signed) JEAN PEDACHENKO.

of the satisfaction it afforded me, when looking back upon the work as a whole, to feel that the Scriptures and other reading material had been deposited in these out-of-the-way places, especially those of Kara, Nertchinsk, and Algatche. Had nothing more been effected than this, and what I subsequently learned was done at Tiumen, these two results would have well repaid me for the journey.

Late on the afternoon of Monday, July 21st, the day of our arrival, we left Chita and proceeded towards Nertchinsk, a distance of 180 miles, where we intended to make our next stoppage. The road ran within sight of the river, and as the route was hilly we had pretty views. Some of the hills I measured as 400 feet above the level of the river, and my barometer, at the highest point, stood at 2,350 feet above the sea. The hills were rounded and well wooded, whilst the lower land resembled English downs. We saw some of the flora of which Baron Rosen speaks so admiringly, and among them a flower we had not noticed before, like blue larkspur. On both sides of the Yablonoi range are grown wheat, rye, oats, hemp, flax, potatoes, cabbage, turnips, lettuce, radishes, onions, spinach, and horseradish. In the valleys was abundance of grass, but few cattle to graze it. We saw also buckwheat and barley growing, but neither the fields under cultivation, nor the Russian inhabitants, were numerous, nor did we come in contact, after passing Chita, with many Buriats, though we inspected one of their sacred spots on a hill not far from that town. It consisted of a few rough stones piled together, with some dried branches of trees, on which were hung small flags and strips of calico, having inscribed on them verses in the

Thibetan or Mongolian language. We had passed several of these south of the Baikal, and the Russian drivers had usually told us that they were Buriats' graves. Sometimes there were sweetmeats lying about, and copper money, which the Russian yemstchiks did not scruple to collect and pocket. Sometimes, too, we found horse-shoes strewn around, and almost invariably a quantity of tufts of horse-hair tied to the bushes, the appearance of the whole reminding one of the so-called holy wells to which the Romanists of Ireland make pilgrimage. The yemstchiks said that the flags painted with demons were to frighten devils away, and that the coins and sweets were given as offerings to their God; but that if a Buriat had nothing to give, he cut off a piece of his horse's tail and tied it to the bush.

I noticed that these spots were usually on elevated ground, like the "high places" denounced by the Hebrew prophets, and after reading the travels of Huc, Erman, and Hill, I make no doubt that they were not Buriats' graves at all, but the *obos* which are erected throughout Tartary, and at which the people worship the spirits of the mountains, a superstition of the Shamanist Buriats, which extends, at least partially, to other aboriginal tribes in Siberia.*

As we passed along the road, we sometimes overtook companies of emigrants from Russia, or from other parts of Siberia, who were wandering further east. We

* The natives believe that their shamans have more power than other people with the spirits infesting the mountains. Accordingly, sacrifices are offered to these spirits, and are carried off secretly by the shamans. Horse-hair seems to hold a conspicuous place in connection with their superstitions. Mr. Erman speaks of the practice of the Yakutes in tying knots of it on trees; and Mr. Hill states that the Yakutes informed him that the rites of their ancient worship consisted for the most part in sacrifices to invisible spirits, and that portions of the horses' tails were

heard, at Barnaul, that peasants are encouraged thus to migrate. Also, we sometimes drove by labourers in the fields, which gave an opportunity to the passing yemstchik to salute them in Russian fashion: "*Bogh pomotch*," "May God be your help," to which the reply is, "*Spasibo*," "Thank you," or "Save you!" a very similar custom to that I have observed in the west of Ireland, where the car-driver accosts his brother Pat, digging potatoes, with a "Bal o' ye airth," "God bless the work," or, more probably, it will be, "God and Mary bless the work," to which Pat replies, "And you too." They both remind one of the salutation of the Hebrew, Boaz, "The Lord be with you!" to which his reapers replied; "The Lord bless thee!"

I confess to having been sometimes tired of travelling so many days without being able to read; I managed to get through only two or three small works, for, notwithstanding my air-cushions and a paper-knife placed below the line I was looking at, the shaking of the tarantass rendered study almost impossible. After leaving Chita on Monday, we travelled all day and all night on Tuesday, and on Wednesday found ourselves approaching Nertchinsk, a town surrounded by a hilly district noted for its minerals. The mining region extends over a large area, and for a long period of years provided employment to vast numbers of convicts, as also for many Polish exiles after the insurrection of

attached to trees to notify to the spirits who might chance to pass by that such rites had been performed, and that thereabouts they would find the offered sacrifice. From the oldest times the Buriats have been accustomed about midsummer, when the cattle are in good condition, to celebrate festivals for the good spirits, the rites being followed by wrestling matches, and other popular amusements; and the crafty Buddhist lamas have recognised and sanctioned these ancient usages, in order that the Buriats may regard the new religion only as an extension or completion of the old.

1863. The mines were worked under the supervision and direction of an able chief, with a numerous staff of officers; and many distinguished mineralogists here commenced their career. Up to the year 1847, silver and lead formed the principal products.* Tin and zinc also, and the aqua marina are found in the neighbourhood of Nertchinsk, and 130 miles to the south is the mountain of Odon Tchelon, celebrated for its gems, including the topaz and emerald, which latter Mr. Erman speaks of as green, yellow, and blue. To these minerals must be added gold, which is found in large quantities in the bed of the Nertcha and its tributaries, besides iron, antimony, and arsenic. In Petersburg, I heard the gold-mines of Nertchinsk spoken of as "large and well worked"; but other reports went to show that the Government mines brought in little to the Crown; and we heard that most of them about Nertchinsk have been sold, so that mining affairs at the time of our visit were in a transition state.

* Of the former 4 tons, and of the latter 570 tons, were produced annually. The discovery of lead was of great importance, as it had been previously necessary to bring it all the way from England to Barnaul for the smelting of the ores of the Altai, in which region little or no lead is found. The lead of Nertchinsk, however, did not find its way so far as the Russian arsenals, because, by reason of carriage, it would have cost six times the price of English lead delivered either in Petersburg or Moscow.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SILVER AND (SO-CALLED) QUICKSILVER MINES OF NERTCHINSK.

The supposed quicksilver-mines.—Inadequate evidence of their existence.—Unsupported statements of writers.—Not known to Anglo-Siberians.—Silver-mines perhaps intended.—Deleterious fumes a myth.—Questionable allegations regarding silver-mines.—Misstatements exposed.—Testimonies of Collins and other eye-witnesses.—Accounts of ex-prisoners and Lutheran pastor.—Nertchinsk Zavod and work in the mines.—Condition of affairs in 1866.—Present state of things.—The Nemesis of exaggeration.

WHEN crossing the Pacific I heard it remarked by an American clergyman that Mrs. Beecher Stowe, in her exaggerated account, as he thought it, of American slavery, showed great shrewdness in assigning to her story a locality that was very remote and unknown to most of her readers. A similar observation might be made in regard to not a few of the writers on Siberian exiles and their labours in the mines. How the idea first came into my mind I know not, but when in 1874 an Englishman, born in Russia, told me in Pëtersburg that the worst of Russian criminals were put down in quicksilver-mines in Siberia, where they were speedily killed by unhealthy fumes, it seemed to me like an item of news I had heard before. Since my return from Siberia the question has been frequently put to me, Did you go to the quicksilver-mines, where the exiles are so cruelly treated? Baron

Rosen also wrote, "Eight persons of the above-mentioned eleven criminal categories were dispatched at once to the quicksilver-mines of Nertchinsk; . . . . they worked for long years underground in the mines, like the other forced labourers." Again, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* for 21st November, 1878, quoting, apparently, Captain Wiggins, says: "Desperate criminals only are sent to labour in the quicksilver-mines, and for these there is a specially severe discipline provided, and 'horrors,' without doubt, exist." And I have somewhere read, if I mistake not, that in the vicinity of Nertchinsk was a quicksilver-mine, which for a time was worked, but that the loss of life entailed upon the convict labourers was so great as to cause it to be given up.

Now it is somewhat remarkable that I have been unable to learn that there is a quicksilver-mine in Siberia at all, or to get satisfactory proof that one ever existed. This may perhaps surprise my readers, but I proceed to explain myself thus:—The "English Cyclopædia," under the article "Mercury," mentions various places where this mineral is found, but says nothing of Siberia. Yet surely, if mines exist there, affording employment for numerous labourers, we ought to hear something of their output. Again, in "Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines," a standard book on mining (p. 120), we find a good deal concerning the mines of Siberia, of those in the Urals, the Altai, and Daouria (which last comprise those about Nertchinsk), but nothing is said of quicksilver-mines in any one of these regions.* Again, Mr. Atkinson,

* Speaking, however (p. 56), of "Mercury or Quicksilver," the author says: "Argental Mercury, or native silver amalgam, has been found at

who spent several years in Asiatic Russia, went to the district of Nertchinsk, and had friends among the mining engineers, says: "Tin and zinc ores are found, but neither have as yet been much worked, and I am not aware of the existence of quicksilver, though it is said to be found in these regions." Mr. Eden, in his valuable little compilation on Siberia, speaking of its mineralogy, says, "Quicksilver also is reported to exist in some of the north-eastern provinces"; but he gives no authority for the report, says nothing of its being worked, nor mentions the existence of it at Nertchinsk. I may further add that recently I have seen the Englishman whom I met at Kiakhta, and who since has twice passed through Nertchinsk. He asked particularly of an officer connected with the mines for one of quicksilver, and was told that, though there was said to be quicksilver in the neighbourhood, it was not worked.

To these testimonies I must add my own, that neither in the town of Nertchinsk, through which we passed, nor in the neighbourhood, nor indeed throughout Siberia, did we anywhere hear of a quicksilver-mine. The only testimony I have ever received in the opposite direction is that of a released political exile, who has told me that he once heard from some of his fellow-prisoners at Petrovsky Zavod, many miles distant, that there was a small quicksilver-mine at Nertchinsk, but so poor an affair that it was not

. . . . Kolyvan, in Siberia. But Kolyvan is thousands of miles from Nertchinsk, and on the Obi, where there are no quicksilver-mines. Further (on page 66 of "Ure's Dictionary"), the imports of quicksilver are given as coming from Spain, the United States, Chili, Australia, Hanse towns, Hanover, Austria, Italy, Mexico, and other parts, but nothing is said of any from Siberia.

worked. Subsequently my informant was deported to four places in succession round about Nertchinsk, but he neither saw nor heard anything more of the said quicksilver-mine. Accordingly, on meeting, since my return, with an English acquaintance who has spent a large part of his life in Siberia, and who knows it well, I said to him, "You have heard, have you not, that there are quicksilver-mines in Siberia?" to which he replied in the affirmative, but he did not know where they existed; and when I asked him whether, if I took upon myself to say that there was no such thing as a quicksilver-mine in Siberia, he could contradict me, he thought awhile, and then was obliged to confess he could not. The Englishman from Kiakhta said the same; and my most recent informant, a released political exile, who spent some years in the mines about Nertchinsk, assures me to the same effect. In the face, therefore, of the prevalent notion to the contrary, and notwithstanding what little evidence I have been able to collect in their favour, I must express my grave doubts as to whether mercury has ever been worked, in any sense worthy of the term, by Russian convicts; and I shall further venture on the assertion that there does not exist a quicksilver-mine in Siberia at all.

But perhaps *silver*-mines were intended instead of "quicksilver," in which case it should be observed that, if the quicksilver-mines have no existence, then the slow process of killing convicts by their fumes is a delusion. That working in quicksilver-mines is destructive to health is perfectly well known; but working in silver-mines is quite another matter. When at Barnaul, we heard nothing of any difficulty arising under this head in the working of the Altai silver-mines.

When in the Rocky Mountains, I heard from a Russian lady, who had been down the silver-mine near Virginia city, that the heat was very great, but she said nothing as to the air being otherwise objectionable. Mr. Collins, also, describing his descent of one of the Nertchinsk mines, the silver-mine of Zarentunskie, says: "We now passed along another drift, and found nothing unpleasant in this underground passage." Moreover, the two released exiles, to whose information I have already alluded, have told me that they never perceived any objectionable fumes,—that, in fact, there were none.

But, apart from the supposed deadly fumes, there has been a great deal said and written respecting the Siberian mines in general, and those of Nertchinsk in particular, which my experience and reading lead me to question, not to say to contradict. The number of Englishmen who have visited the great mine of Nertchinsk is represented, I believe, solely by Captain Cochrane,* and great changes have taken place since his day. In 1848, the Emperor Nicolas decided, with a view to carrying out his plans in the regions of the Amur, that the whole of the people in the Trans-Baikal should become Cossacks. Hitherto a large body of the population had been employed in mining operations, and Mr. Atkinson speaks of this sudden change as having closed the silver-mines of Nertchinsk; but I

* Perhaps this is not to be wondered at, if the inaccessibility of the place be considered. It is 5,250 miles east of Petersburg, 700 miles nearly due north of Peking, about 480 north of the Chinese wall, and 1,000 miles west of the Pacific. Captain Cochrane went there half a century ago, at which time there were 1,600 convicts in the mines, and he speaks sternly of their treatment, their miserable huts, and of their haggard, worn-down, wretched, half-starved appearance. But he stayed at the place only a day, and his book does not say that he entered the mines at all.

suppose he means relatively, for the mines have been worked for many years since by convicts, and, if we are to believe all that is written on the subject, they are full of horrors to the present day. But I shall venture to examine a few of these writings which say so, and compare them with the statements of travellers and eye-witnesses. I shall offer, too, my own experience, and then leave the reader to judge respecting the truth of the whole.

The author of "The Russians of To-day" says (p. 216): "The miners are supposed to be the worst offenders, and their punishment is tantamount to death by slow torture; for it is certain to kill them in ten years, and ruins their health long before that time. If the convict have money or influential friends, he had better use the time between his sentence and transportation in *buying a warrant* which consigns him to the lighter kinds of labour above ground, otherwise he will inevitably be sent under earth, and *never again see the sky* until he is hauled up to die in an infirmary." This was published in 1878, and I have italicised the doubtful or erroneous words.

Again, the *Contemporary Review* for September 1879, in an article on "Conspiracies in Russia," says (p. 143): "Of the treatment of political exiles in Siberia, as it has been carried on *for a long time past*, I have before me a thrilling description from the pen of Mr. Robert Lemke, a German writer, who has visited the various penal establishments of Russia with an official legitimation. He had been to Tobolsk, after which he had to make a *long, dreary journey* in a wretched car, until a *high mountain* rose before him. In its torn and craggy flank the mountain showed a colossal opening

similar to the mouth of a burnt-out crater. Fetid vapours, which almost took away his breath, ascended from it."

Mr. Lemke then walks down with a guide, and—

"Entering a room of considerable extent, but which was scarcely a man's height, and which was dimly lit by an oil lamp, the visitor asked, 'Where are we?' 'In the sleeping-room of the condemned! Formerly it was a gallery of the mine; now it serves as a shelter.' The visitor shuddered. This subterranean sepulchre, lit by neither sun nor moon, was called a sleeping-room. Alcove-like cells were hewn into the rock; here, on a couch of damp, half-rotten straw, covered with a sackcloth, the unfortunate sufferers were to repose from the day's work. Over each cell a *cramp iron* was fixed, wherewith to lock up the prisoners like ferocious dogs. No door, no window anywhere.

"Conducted through another passage, where a few lanterns were placed, and whose end was also barred by an iron gate, Mr. Lemke came to a large vault, partly lit. *This was the mine.* A deafening noise of pickaxes and hammers. Then he saw some *hundreds* of wretched figures, with shaggy beards, sickly faces, reddened eyelids, *clad in tatters,*—some of them *barefoot*, others in sandals, fettered with heavy foot-chains. No song, no whistling; now and then they *shyly* looked at the visitor and his companion."

Mr. Lemke leaves the mine and speaks to one of the officers about the convicts' rest. "Rest!" said the officer, "convicts must always labour. There is no rest for them; they are condemned to perpetual forced labour, and he who once enters the mine *never leaves it!*" And so on.*

* On my reading this description to one who knows from painful experience what the mines were like, he laughed outright at its absurdity.

These remarkable extracts may be appropriately followed by reference to an article in the *Echo* for May 5th, 1881. It numbered 100 lines, and on reading it I had the curiosity to mark every line that appeared to me to contain a misstatement or a blunder. No less than 20 were marked; that is to say, one line in every five. The article is headed, "On the Road to Siberia." The author begins by starting his pedestrian exiles on the *march* at the Sparrow Hills at Moscow, and in crossing Russia he gives them all sorts of difficulties by road to overcome; whereas I have shown, in an earlier chapter, that for years past the prisoners are taken by steam across Russia, and that the exile reaches the first prison in Siberia without walking at all. Then the author places his pedestrian exiles under the charge of *mounted, long-speared* guards, feeds them with bread and *oil* (which latter I never yet heard of in a Russian prison), and, what is more amusing, feeds the Cossack horses with the *meal* (whatever that may be) eaten by their masters. Then having got his exiles over the Ural, he says :—

"Beyond the Ural, however, with its simple industries and markets, the region becomes more barbarous; it is less relieved by the softening aspects of social life; the exile population, clad in sheepskins, thickens at every step; the cold grows so intense" [this, by-the-bye, in the "open season," *i.e.* the summer], "that occasionally the Cossacks on guard are frozen, lance in hand; and the silver-mines are now *not far distant, —immense caverns*, illuminated by torches of pine, peopled by men with leaden-hued faces, caused by exhalations from the copper ore, in which the silver is found imbedded; inhabited too by *women* and *chil-*

dren, who share in the unhealthful labour, and contribute their quota to the terrible totals of mortality, *living*, *dying*, and being buried often *far below the light of day*."

Now, when I read this, my first thought was to take Mr. *Punch's* advice, and "write to the *Times*," but I repressed my feelings till I could gather these extracts, italicise the questionable words, and then calmly place before the reader such remarks upon the matter as I have to offer. Let me, then, observe, in the first place, that neither of these three authors professes to write from personal experience. Had the writer in the *Echo* been to Siberia in the "open season," he would not have frozen his mounted guard, lance in hand, but would have made him trudge on foot at the side of his convoy, sweating beneath the load of rifle and bayonet; and neither of the three writers, had they been to Siberia, would have been so vague with regard to its geography. The author of the "Russians of To-day" (p. 216) informs his readers that "Siberia is a territory covering about *six* times the area of England and Scotland!" Had he written *sixty* times he would have been not far from the mark; but—perhaps six was a printer's error!

Again, the *Contemporary* writer says that Mr. Lemke "had been to Tobolsk, after which he had to make a long dreary journey until a high mountain was before him;" which sentence, though not expressly saying so, leaves one to infer that the mountain was at least in the vicinity, whereas the country about Tobolsk is flat, and there is no mountain answering to the writer's description, where convicts are employed, within 2,000 miles. So, again, the writer for the *Echo*, almost

immediately after getting his exiles over the Urals, informs us that "the silver-mines are now not far distant," which is hardly an exact way of speaking of 3,000 miles.

But I shall now proceed to give such personal information as I am able about Nertchinsk, prefacing what I have to say with words from Mr. Collins's chapters describing his visit to the mines of the district. This, I think, should go far to satisfy an ordinary reader as to the quality of the miners' food, clothing, and sleeping accommodation. "This [gold] mine was a convict establishment, like all the mines east of Lake Baikal. The men were well clad, and in visiting the hospital, prison, and quarters, I found the arrangements for their health and sleeping clean and comfortable. Cooks were preparing dinner for the prisoners. I tasted of the soup, bread, and *kacha*, or grits, made from buckwheat and milk, and found them good and well prepared. There were a number on the sick list, mostly those who had recently arrived, but they were in a warm, clean room, with clean beds and clothing, and with a separate kitchen, where proper diet was prepared for them."

This was published in 1860. Before leaving Asia I had an opportunity of asking an American, who had visited the Nertchinsk mines, as to what he saw, but he told of no such barbarities as those quoted above. Again, I asked an Englishman living in Siberia about women working *in* the silver-mines, but he had never heard of such a thing, nor have I; and my second exile informant denies it; so that I trust the women and the children with "leaden-hued faces,' inhabiting the mines and "sharing in the unhealthful labour,"

exist only in the imagination of the writer for the *Echo*. Had the article said that there were women and children *at* the mines, it would have been less difficult to believe, because I found them at the gold-mines—the women employed in scrubbing, washing, or hard female labour, and their children taken care of, clothed and fed in a school; but this will be alluded to hereafter. Again, I met a naval officer, who had seen the coal-mines at Dui, in Sakhalin, and who spoke of the prison abuses there in no measured terms. He had visited the mines at Nertchinsk five years before we met, and had descended into one of them; but though he said the men looked sickly, and sometimes had to "go on all fours" to get the mineral (which, I suppose, all miners occasionally have to do), yet he had no barbarities of which to speak, and did not confirm any of the notions with which I entered the country, as to the prisoners being kept underground by night and by day. He said they worked twelve hours a day, six on and six off. I questioned, too, the chief of the gold-mines at Kara concerning the silver-mines at Nertchinsk, which are not far off. He denied that the prisoners were kept underground, and *thought* they worked in three sections of eight hours each.

I have three testimonies besides, not from prison officials, travellers, or amateur philanthropists, but from men, two of whom themselves worked in the mines of Nertchinsk; whilst the third, a Lutheran pastor, told me of what he had heard direct from prisoners at the mines, where it was his business periodically to visit. He said that old convicts at Nertchinsk and Kara had told him of Rozguildieff, a director, 20 years before, who gave them only 4 lbs. of bread a day, and who

used to go about with four Cossacks behind him, armed with the knout, to thrash those who did not do the prescribed quantity of work. He afterwards became blind. I have heard from another quarter that this man used sometimes to condemn his prisoners, not to so many stripes, but so many "lbs." of the birch—to 10 or 15 lbs., for instance—which meant that the man should be flogged until a certain weight of rods had been used up. But a military officer was sent to inspect the mines, and Rozguildieff was removed; since which time the pastor said that all seemed going on well, and that he had heard no complaints of abuse. I have also heard of this Rozguildieff and his cruelty from a third person, who was at Petrovsky Zavod in 1866, with about 500 prisoners, many of them Polish insurgents. Another testimony respecting the mines is from a Pole whom I met, engaged as a clerk at one of the post-houses. He had been sent to Nertchinsk as a political prisoner, condemned to hard labour, but he said he was not compelled to work. Perhaps he had the good fortune to be taken as a servant, or employed as a clerk; this he did not explain, but he said that the officers were not cruel, and that of the prison treatment he had no complaint to make. He had, he said, 3 lbs. of bread, and ½ lb. of meat a day. He might write a letter every three months; and so well satisfied did he seem with his present lot, that he said if the Emperor were to allow his return to Poland he would certainly go; but if he were offered permission to return only to Russia, he would prefer to stay where he was. One reason for this, it has been suggested, might be that police supervision is more irksome in Russia than in Siberia.

The last testimony I would offer is perhaps the most satisfactory of all, because it came to me direct in English from one who, implicated in the Polish insurrection of 1863, was sent as a political exile to Nertchinsk, with several like offenders from the Russian and Polish aristocracy, he himself being a man who had received a university education. The accounts he gave me relate to the condition of things in 1866 and 1867. The principal centre of the mining district, he said, was called Nertchinsky Zavod, or Bolshoi Zavod, "the great works," at which, however, the *mines* were abandoned before 1865, and the prison was afterwards used for a hospital. Round about were various mines, works, hospitals, and prisons, such as Kadaya, Akatuya, Klitchka, Alexandreffsky, Algatche (the last a smelting place), and some others. At Stretinsk and Sivakoff, on the Shilka, were ship-yards, where prisoners were employed. There would seem to be labour going on still at Nertchinsk and at Algatche, since, from the Governor's letter to me, it appears that some of my books have been sent to these two places, and to the hospital at Stretinsk; but the greater part of the mines just mentioned have now passed out of Government into private hands. I am speaking, however, of things as they were in the time of my informant, who laboured at Kadaya, Akatuya, Alexandreffsky, and Nertchinsky Zavod. Kadaya was only two or three versts from the Chinese frontier,* Alexandreffsky was about six versts from the frontier, and 35 from head-quarters.

* This is the place to which the Russian poet Mikhaïloff was banished for writing his proclamation or manifesto, *Molodom pokoleniou*, "To the rising generation," as was also his literary friend Tchernichewsky, who is called the intellectual chief and founder of Nihilism. Mikhaïloff died

At most of the places there were prisons built: at Alexandreffsky, of stone; at Kadaya, of wood; and at Akatuya, partly of wood and partly of stone. At Nertchinsky Zavod the prison was very old, and was empty. The commandant, General Chitoff, living there, he preferred to house the convicts at a convenient distance. At Alexandreffsky there were not less than 700 prisoners in three buildings. Of these, 30 or 40 were Russian political offenders; the remainder were Polish insurgents of 1863. At Akatuya there were 110 prisoners, 60 of whom were Polish priests, together with 22 other prisoners sent to join them for extra punishment.

Akatuya, by reason of its isolation and loneliness, was regarded as the worst place of all, there being no village around it. There was reported to have been a Tatar in this prison, before 1866, chained to the wall, but this was an exceptional case, and such things, it was said, were not done to the political prisoners, some of whom had friends who could bring influence to bear in their favour. My informant, being counted "noble," was exempted from wearing chains during the journey, but on his arrival he had irons, he said, of 7 lbs. (Russian) on the feet, and the same weight on the hands. If so, these handcuffs must have been heavier than any I have seen in Russia or Siberia. There were sometimes cases in which criminal prisoners burst into fits of ferocity, and were guilty of such insubordination as to call for special punishment. At Sivakoff, for instance, he had known men suspended for a time by the armpits, but none were chained to barrows or

and was buried at Kadaya; Tchernichewsky, who it seems is feeble and delicate in constitution, was not compelled to work, nor did he carry chains; and after spending a certain time at Kadaya, he was removed to Viluisk, in the province of Yakutsk.

tools, as has been sometimes done. In the case of my informant himself, who insulted the Governor-General Korsakoff, and also joined others in a league to refuse to work on Sundays (the cruel and unjust regulation to this effect was enforced on these exiles in 1866), he, with many more, and for a considerable time, was put first on half rations, then deprived of meat, then of milk, and then was not permitted to lounge in the yard, but had to go straight from work to his ward. The priests had joined in this resistance to Sunday labour, and there were also Protestants and a Jew among the league. Some of the priests, however, were the first to give in, and all at length followed, so that they had afterwards only four holidays in the course of the year, though this was exclusive of bath-day, which recurred once a fortnight, and was a holiday as at Kara.

I asked as to the formation of the mines, and found that some of them had shafts and galleries; one shaft in particular, by reason of its construction, being dangerous to descend. In some cases it seems that the granite was dug from the side of a hill, and the work of the prisoners consisted largely of boring holes for blasting, which were charged with powder by Cossacks or labourers, and, in the absence of the prisoners, were fired. From an engineering point of view, the mines, as far as I could understand, were worked badly enough; and this agreed with what I had heard elsewhere. The mineral was brought to the surface in baskets, but they had no steam or horse-power. There were veins of silver, but often the galleries did not follow them, and the mines seemed to subserve the purpose of providing hard labour for malefactors, rather than

that of bringing gain to the Emperor. Whilst my informant was talking to me, he had in his hand some pins, and, holding up one of them, he said, "I did not see a piece of silver as big as that all the time I was at Akatuya."

I inquired carefully respecting the hours of labour, and heard that in 1866 it was 13 hours a day, which agrees with the hours I found at Kara in the gold-mines. At noon they came out of the mines to dinner —unless, that is, a man had arranged his hours otherwise; for it seemed that so long as they did not worry the Cossacks or prevent their lounging about and smoking, the prisoners might do their allotted number of hours when they pleased. There was, moreover, no definite amount of mineral required of every man daily, and hence he might work hard or not, pretty much as he liked.

This, then, appears to have been the condition of things at Nertchinsk 15 years ago;* and from what I heard in Siberia, matters since seem to have improved rather than otherwise, though it must not be supposed that the lot of the convicts is an easy one. I am far from attempting to make it appear so. No doubt the corporal punishment inflicted in many cases is very severe. I shall have more to say of this hereafter. The period of an exile's life spent at the mines, before being set free to colonize, cannot but be hard. What-

* I have quite unexpectedly had the opportunity of submitting this chapter, in manuscript, to a second released exile, who was at the Nertchinsk mines at the time alluded to, and who, after expressing his great surprise at the accuracy of my account, confirmed it almost to the letter, adding, however, that he thought I underrated the number of political exiles; but he referred to the numbers deported in 1863 and during the present year, rather than to the average number for the intervening years.

ever laxity of discipline may prevail, as compared with the prisons of other countries, the herding together of the worst of characters, the deprivation of social, intellectual, and religious privileges, to speak of nothing else, must to many make life in the mines, from the nature of things, a burden. But this is very different from killing exiles by inches in quicksilver fumes, or keeping men, women, and children underground by night and by day, with insufficient clothing, food, and sleep. Such gross misstatements must in time be refuted, and the revulsion caused by their exposure often makes people too easily believe less severity than really exists. The treatment of prisoners necessarily depends greatly upon those who are set over them, and the study of human nature about us renders it quite needless to go to Siberia to discover that among prison officials there are both bad and good. That there have been instances of cruelty in the mines I do not doubt, but I believe far less have occurred than some writers would have us believe; and I trust that what has here been written may tend to throw some light upon a matter of which many are desirous to know the truth.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FROM NERTCHINSK TO STRETINSK.

Nertchinsk.—Its climate and history.—Scene of a Russo-Chinese treaty.—Appearance of the town.—Visits to authorities.—Dinner with a rich merchant.—Siberian table customs.—Poverty of travelling fare.—Fine arts in Siberia.—Painting and photography.—Journey from Nertchinsk.

BEFORE passing from Nertchinsk, a few words should be said respecting its history, and as at Nertchinsky Zavod, 2,230 feet above the sea, there is a meteorological observatory—its climate, also. Mr. Atkinson writes: "The climate is not so horrible as many have supposed, nor is the earth a perpetual mass of ice at a few feet below the surface, as I have seen it stated. The summers are not so long as in Europe, but they are very hot, and the country produces a magnificent flora. Both agriculture and horticulture are carried on successfully, and vegetables of almost every kind can be grown here. Tobacco is extensively cultivated, for which the people find a sale among the Buriats and Tunguses."

Again, Baron Rosen, speaking of Chita, which is on the same parallel and within 200 miles of Nertchinsk, says: "The high situation of Chita considerably increases the cold in winter, but it is healthy, with a fresh bracing climate. The sky is almost always clear, excepting in August, when the thunder is incessant for

days together, and then follows a shower, beginning with enormously large single drops, which in a few hours floods all the roads; for the water falls rapidly down the slopes, digging deep trenches as it runs. The great electricity of the air is remarkable: the slightest movement of cloth or wool produces sparks or crackling. The rapidity of the vegetation is most extraordinary; for both corn and vegetables ripen within the five weeks in which the frosts cease, *i.e.*, from the middle of June to the end of July. One of my comrades first introduced the growing of cucumbers in the open air, and melons in hot-beds." And the Baron afterwards adds: "When I was chosen senior of the prison, I salted down in brandy casks 60,000 cucumbers out of our garden." Whether the Baron is accurate in speaking of five weeks only during which there is no frost, seems doubtful. I observe in the meteorological report from Nertchinsky Zavod, that in 1877 the lowest temperature was, in June, 36°·8; in July, 47°·8; and in August, 41°. If, therefore, frost occurred in these months, it must have been ground-frost caused by radiation; which would not affect the crops. The lowest temperature of the year, which occurred in January, was 45°·5 below zero; the highest temperature, 95°·3, occurring in August.

It should be observed that the Trans-Baikal province has a climate almost peculiar to itself. From the north, the Polar Sea, immense tracts of swamp, lakes, and rivers supply the atmosphere with moisture, a great deal of which is precipitated, in passing southwards, over a region more than 1,000 miles in breadth; and as the clouds approach the Altai, in process of elevating themselves to pass the mountains, they part

with their last drops, which fall along the northern, southern, and eastern sides of the range. But this happens, of course, only when the prevailing winds are from the north. Upon the south there are few lakes or rivers; while the land in general is dry, and remote from the sea. The winter clouds from the Indian Ocean in the south, and the Caspian on the west, discharging themselves upon the mountains of Thibet and Bucharia, rarely pass the desert of Gobi. Accordingly, the winds blowing so regularly from this direction bring no water; and thus, rain clouds coming for the most part from the Pacific only, it comes to pass that the fall of rain and snow about Chita and Nertchinsk is exceedingly small, and the winter passenger, for lack of snow upon which to drive, has frequently in this region to mount his sledge on wheels.* As summer travellers, however, we had no difficulties of this kind, and the absence of rain we regarded as a blessing. The weather was delightful, and I was looking forward, after passing a few more stations, to bid farewell to tarantass and horses, and by steamer to descend the Amur.

* The following table gives for 1875 the number of days of rain and snow, the mean temperature of winter, spring, summer, autumn, and the whole year, and the difference between the mean temperatures of summer and winter, for London and four Siberian towns :—

	WINTER.		SPRING.		SUMMER.		AUTUMN.		YEAR.		Diff.
	Days	Temp.	Days	Temp.	Days	Temp.	Days	Temp.	Days	Temp.	betw.
Nikolaefsk	28	1·27	36	25·70	28	59·05	39	32·23	131	29·56	57·78
Barnaul .	22	6·60	26	42·93	30	61·83	30	29·10	108	35·11	55·23
Irkutsk .	10	— 1·27	17	2·14	25	61·54	11	30·65	63	23·27	62·81
Nertchinsk	5	— 1·40	17	2·81	26	60·70	12	24·90	60	21·75	62·10
London .	47	40·0	34	53·70	42	60·40	44	43·50	167	49·40	20·40

The precipitation (rain and snow) in inches stands as follows at Barnaul, Nertchinsk, and London :—

	Inches.	Inches.	Inches.	Inches.	Inches
Barnaul .	0·92	1·77	6·39	2·93	12·01
Nertchinsk	0·75	0·60	8·77	7·42	17·54
London .	4·76	5·13	9·94	8·21	28·04

The town of Nertchinsk is one of the oldest in Eastern Siberia, having been founded in 1658. After about 10 years it began to rise into a place of importance, and 20 years later was the birthplace of a famous treaty between the Russians and the Chinese.*

The question in dispute was the boundary of the two empires; the Russians first proposing, and the Chinese refusing, that the Amur should be the boundary; after which the Chinese proposed, and the Russians refused, that Albazin, Nertchinsk, and Selenginsk should be surrendered. After several conferences neither party showed a disposition to yield, and both prepared for battle; but this was averted, and a treaty was at length drawn up fixing the boundary between the empires, but by no means in accordance with Russian wishes, for they were completely shut out from the Amur.

After this, Nertchinsk remained for a long time the most easterly of the large towns in the Trans-Baikal region. The discovery of metals in the surrounding mountains increased its importance, and the continued arrival there of exiles, and the stories connected with them, caused the place to be only too well known—at least by name—throughout the empire.

* Mr. Ravenstein gives an interesting account of this. The two nations were represented by the envoy extraordinary Fedor Alexevitch Golovin, and the celestial ambassadors So-fan-lan-ya and Kiw-Kijew, with two Jesuit fathers as interpreters. The Russian envoy was accompanied by a regiment of Regular Militia (Strelzi) 1,500 strong, and two regiments raised in Siberia; but the Chinese ambassadors were accompanied by a force of 9,000 or 10,000 persons, consisting of soldiers, mandarins, servants, and camp followers. They had from 3,000 to 4,000 camels, and at least 15,000 horses; and as they came to the river's bank opposite Nertchinsk, before the arrival of the Russian envoy, the Governor of the town not unnaturally felt uneasy at the presence of so large a company.

At length, however, Golovin arrived, and a large tent was pitched, mid

The town is charmingly situated, 1,845 feet above the sea. The surrounding country is picturesque, and the soil rich. Hill, valley, river, mountain, all combine to make it an interesting spot, apart from its legendary and historic associations. Mr. Knox entered the town from the east, and speaks of the view as especially pleasing, because it was the first Russian town where he saw evidences of age and wealth. The domes of its churches glistened in the sunlight that had broken through the fog and warmed the tints of the whole picture! It struck me, however, very differently. The natural beauties of the place, of course, one could not but admire, but I had left behind the handsome cities of European Russia, and had passed through many cleanly and newly-built towns in Siberia, in comparison with which Nertchinsk struck me as being black with age and decay. There was a woebegone look about the place, and the streets seemed deplorably neglected. Many of the houses were falling to pieces, and gave the town a most untidy appearance.

We reached Nertchinsk on Wednesday morning, July 23rd, and made it our first business to seek the Ispravnik, from whom I wished to get general information respecting prisons and mines, and permission,

way between the fortress and the river, one-half appropriated to the Russians, the other to the Chinese. The Russian portion was covered with a handsome Turkey carpet. Golovin and the Governor of Nertchinsk occupied arm-chairs, placed behind a table, which was spread with a Persian silk embroidered in gold. The Chinese portion was devoid of all ornament. The chiefs of the embassy, seven in number, sat upon pillows placed upon a low bench. The remainder of the mandarins and Russian officers were ranged along both sides of the tent. The Chinese had crossed the river with 40 mandarins and 760 soldiers, 500 of whom remained on the bank of the river, and 260 advanced half-way to the tent. In a similar manner, 500 Russians were placed close to the fort, and 40 officers and 260 soldiers followed the envoy.

perhaps, to visit some of them within reasonable distance, though I hardly hoped to see the great mines, as I knew they were more than 100 miles away from the town, and if I attempted to reach them I should either miss the penal colony of Kara, or lose the steamer which was shortly to leave Stretinsk. We had thought it just possible, moreover, that the Ispravnik might provide some one who could speak English, French, or German, to accompany me to Stretinsk, and thus leave my interpreter free to return.

Nertchinsk formerly stood at the junction of the Nertcha, which flows from the north, and the Shilka. The repeated damage to the houses from floods caused its removal, though even on its present site the lower part of the town has been more than once under water. It was to this lower part we drove in search of the authorities, but the Ispravnik was away "in the country," and his representative was asleep.

We went next to present a letter of introduction to Mr. Bootyn, of whom we had heard at the Alexandreffsky Central Prison, and subsequently at Irkutsk. On approaching his house, it proved to be not only the most remarkable in the town, but, I might add, the grandest we had seen in Siberia. The houses of Nertchinsk have already been alluded to as old, black, and rotten; but Mr. Bootyn is a merchant, miner, and millionaire, who has been to England and round the world, and he was building himself a house, in the construction of which were manifest sundry foreign ideas. It was a huge erection, part of which was executed in Byzantine and castellated styles; and the establishment comprised dwelling-houses, gardens, conservatories, and shops—all in one. The Mr. Bootyn

to whom our letter was addressed was from home, but we were received by his brother, and invited to dine in the verandah conservatory.

This gave us an insight into the social habits of another class of Russians, and I was now beginning to know pretty well what to expect when invited by a Siberian to dinner. Their hospitality is unbounded, though, of course, its manifestation differs according to the means of the host. Our first dinner in Siberia was at a merchant's house, where brother-merchants in travelling put up, and hence it was called a hotel. We were asked if we would have our dinner in our own room, or *en famille*. I was rash enough to choose the latter, and we found ourselves seated at the table with mine host and a queer lot of male guests (there were no females), who appeared to be clerks or fellow-lodgers. We were first requested to help ourselves from a tureen, in the centre of the table, to *stchee*, or soup, on the top of which the fat floated like oil; and for the next course we had bones of veal, followed by game and sour berries. Our fellow-guests ate ravenously, tearing the bones to pieces with their teeth. Nothing was placed on the table to drink, but towards the close of the meal a glass of milk, as is common in Western Siberia, was given to each. The foregoing represents, I should think, the dinner of the well-to-do Siberian tradesman. There is nothing like display, and things are sometimes served in a rough fashion. If any one wishes to be brushed clean of over-fastidiousness in the arrangements of the table, I can conscientiously recommend a tour across Siberia. In one house where I was entertained—and entertained most kindly—the fish was brought in in the frying-pan, and

thus placed in the middle of the table, which, if it did not minister to the delights of the eye, gave us food admirably hot. On one occasion we dined with a teacher of languages in a classical school, and he gave us stchee, roast meat with sour wild cherries, then preserved maroshka berries and pudding. We dined in a similar fashion with a medical doctor, but fared more sumptuously in the house of a gold-seeker, where salt-spoons reminded us of England.

At Nertchinsk we had fallen on pleasant places. The number of plants and flowers (I had almost said shrubs) on the table went far to hide the guests from one another, but there was abundance of excellent food. Had we been bibbers of wine, there was no lack of the choicest vintages; but, upon our declining alcohol, we were offered some excellent cherry syrup, which, in so remote a region, was a great luxury. Further east, I was invited to dinner by the acting governor of a town, where the first course was provided, they said, for my special benefit. It was a salmon pie. Fish pie is a grand dish with peasants, and their betters too, throughout Russia. If well prepared it is excellent. The crust is not made with butter, but with yeast, as it is commonly eaten in Lent, when butter is forbidden. I dined most sumptuously, however, in Siberia, at Vladivostock, with the officers of a Russian man-of-war, at the house of the Governor Here everything was served with the elegance and refinement of an English mansion; and the customs observed were much the same, except that the hostess (in the absence of her husband, the Governor) gave a toast standing, and left her seat to come round and do the honours by touching glasses with several of her

guests. Thus I saw something of the table customs of nearly all classes. Grace was sung before meals in the house of a devoutly orthodox general in Petersburg, and now and then I saw a peasant, before or after a meal, turn to the ikon and cross himself; but grace before meat did not appear to obtain as a custom in Siberia. I partook, too, of all sorts of Siberian food, from sumptuous dinners down to what was often very humble fare indeed. I think the *best* dinner we got at a post-station consisted of chicken soup, then the newly-killed chicken that made it, and pancakes. This, perhaps, was due in part to our not usually caring to wait until a meal could be cooked, and we could not always eat what the post-people had prepared for themselves, even when it was ready. Our provision basket, however, supplied us with a few relishes to bread and butter, and thus we made shift from town to town. I never travelled with anything like such bodily fatigue as during the drive across Siberia; and never, that I can remember, ate so little animal food during a corresponding period of time; but I have no hesitation in saying that my health was better after the journey than before it.

Before we left Mr. Bootyn's, we were shown some of the best rooms in the house, elegantly furnished. In one of them was a fair collection of European paintings, some of which I recognized as Swiss scenes. I do not remember seeing any other paintings in Siberia worth naming, nor do I remember being shown any statuary. Both would, of course, be carried safely with difficulty over such immense distances and such uneven roads.

The Siberians are, however, by no means behind in photography. When preparing for my tour, I had

serious thoughts of taking with me a camera and dry plates, thinking thereby to secure some novel pictures, to the surprise, perhaps, of the people. It proved well that I attempted nothing of the kind, for much trouble was thereby saved to me, and instead of my astonishing the natives, I found that the natives astonished me. I visited parts of Siberia of which no English author has written, but discovered that photography had everywhere preceded me; and though there were many villages in which we could not procure white bread, there were few towns in which the same could be said of photographs.*

In Siberia, some of the photographers are Polish exiles; some are Germans; one I met was a Frenchman, and another a Finn. Their landscapes are not particularly good, and their productions are dear. Landscapes of the size of views which may be purchased in Rome for sixpence cost in Siberia at least six shillings; and when, at Krasnoiarsk, our party went to be photographed, we paid for cabinet groups

* It is interesting to know that in certain departments of photography, Russia stands well to the front. In theoretical, scientific, and landscape photography, I am informed England takes place in the foremost rank; but in portrait photography, Russia is before us. Among first-class photographic artists in Petersburg, the names might be mentioned of Levitzky, Bergamasco, and Dinier; and in Moscow that of Eichenwald; but the most remarkable photographer in all Russia, probably, is one Karelin, at Nijni Novgorod. A small view of Kasan, which I purchased in the city of that name, and which is printed by the phototype process, seemed to indicate that this branch of the art had extended more widely, and made further progress eastward, than might have been expected at the time of my visit. There are to be had in Petersburg and Moscow some magnificent photographic panoramas of the two capitals; and in descending the Urals, on the Asiatic side, I procured what can rarely be had elsewhere—a photograph of a surface iron-mine; whilst further east was added one of a gold-mine. A photographic view of Ekaterineburg, given me there, shows how thin and light is the air in Russia, for purposes of photography, as compared with ours in England.

at the rate of sixteen shillings the half-dozen copies. It should be remembered, however, that the demand is limited.

After taking leave of Mr. Bootyn, we prepared for a journey of 150 miles, which was to bring us to Stretinsk. The upper town of Nertchinsk is built at the end of a long sweeping prairie, exposed to all the winds that blow up through the valley, or down from the cold summits of the Yablonoi Mountains. We came towards night to a solitary house in the midst of the steppe, the poorest station we had seen. The outer roof was off, and the building divided into two compartments—one for travellers and the other for horses—the one being not much better than the other; whilst on the opposite side of the road was the only building in sight—a roofless shed. The only food to be obtained was black bread, salt, and water, and in this place it looked at first as if we should be compelled to stay; for they had not six—that is, two "pairs" of—horses; they had four; and I suggested that the difficulty should be overcome by putting two horses to each vehicle. But this they said was illegal, because their four horses would make only one "pair," and these they were willing to attach to our tarantass, if we would pile on the rest of our boxes before and behind. By what mathematical process they explained this reasoning about pairs I have never yet fathomed, but we were only too thankful to get on at any price, and early next morning we drove into Stretinsk.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FROM STRETINSK TO UST-KARA.

Arrival at Stretinsk.—Recorded distances from Petersburg.—Taking in a passenger.—Travelling allowance to officers.—Parting with interpreter.—Farewell to tarantass.—Starting to Kara.—The world before me.—Previous writers on the Amur.—Gliding down the Shilka.—Talking by signs.—My Cossack attendant.—Taking an oar.—How Russians sleep.—Arrival at Ust-Kara.

ON reaching Stretinsk, we were on the same meridian as Nanking. We had been reminded of our increasing distance from Petersburg by the verst-posts which kept us company all the way. At every station, too, there is a post setting forth how many versts distant are Petersburg, Moscow, and the government towns on either side. The verst-posts recur at every two-thirds of an English mile. At the top they are shaped square, being so turned that the approaching traveller sees at a glance how many versts it is to the station which he has left, or to which he is journeying. When we entered Siberia at Tiumen, the distance was 2,543 versts from Petersburg; at Tomsk it increased to 4,052; at Krasnoiarsk to 4,606; and at Irkutsk to 5,611; whilst on arrival at Stretinsk it was almost 7,000 versts, or 4,600 miles.

It has already been stated that, after leaving Nertchinsk, the number of our horses was reduced. On reaching the last station but one, we had to take in a

passenger. We overtook an officer, his wife and family, whose acquaintance we had made in the Obi steamer, and whom we subsequently met several times on our journey eastward. His wife spoke French, and their three or four children were exceedingly well-behaved. We could not help pitying this party of six, all of whom were stowed away in a single tarantass, not much, if any, bigger than ours, which was not excessively large for two. One of the children, if I mistake not, was a baby, and if to the discomforts I have described as accompanying us two be added the crowding of all these children and an untold quantity of baggage into a single vehicle, then one may picture some of the difficulties with which Russian officers and their families travel in Siberia.

This party having arrived before us had secured one "pair" of horses, and the question arose as to whether the remaining pair should be given to us or to a telegraph officer, who had also arrived before us, but who was proceeding in our direction. He proposed that we should have the horses and take him carriage free, which, rather than wait, we were glad to do, and he thereby was able to pocket his travelling allowance.*

* The Russian Government, when sending officers overland from Petersburg to the Amur province, say, for instance, to Nikolaefsk, grants them money according to their rank, and the number of horses they are supposed to drive. Thus, a lieutenant is allowed 2 horses, a captain of the third rank 3, captain of the second rank 4, captain of first rank 5, rear-admiral 6, vice-admiral 7, full admiral 8; and the sum for horses in each case is doubled; in addition to which, for outfit, single officers receive on the outgoing journey half a year's pay, and married officers a year's; but when they are returning, three-fourths of a year's pay is allowed to married and single alike. The distance from Petersburg to Nikolaefsk is 9,848 versts, and the cost of a horse for this distance, at the time of my visit, was 277 roubles—say £28. An officer, therefore, going to this privileged part, or returning on furlough, might multiply £28 by the

On arriving at Stretinsk we found it a good-sized town, with hospital, sundry factories, barracks, and other buildings, befitting the chief port of the Upper Amur. We were reminded, however, of its distance from civilized centres almost before our horses stopped, for a youth rushed up to inquire whether our tarantass was for sale. They make no axletrees of iron in these parts, and hence, when a traveller arrives who has a tarantass thus furnished, he has a good chance, after having had the use of it all across the country, to sell it at Stretinsk for as much or more than it cost in Europe. White bread was at famine prices here, costing 6*d.* a lb. —five times as much as we paid at Tobolsk—because the American flour deposited at Nikolaefsk ascends the river a distance of nearly 2,000 miles, and the Russian flour, from Irkutsk, travels 900 miles by land. So between the two, delicate persons "brought up on white bread," as the Russians say, fare badly.

We called first at the telegraph office, and presented a letter of introduction to Mr. Koch, who was ready at once to help, and from whom I learned that my coming had been announced to the Commandant, Colonel Merkasin, a worthy officer, of whom I heard a good account from a released political exile, who said that prisoners received much kindness at his hands, and that, if the colonel used their labour, he paid them fairly

number of horses to which his rank entitled him, double the product, and add 6, 9, or 12 months' pay, and so realize a heavy purse. Out of this he might save considerably by hiring less horses than his dignity was supposed to require, by sharing expenses with another traveller, or, lastly, in the case of one already in the Amur province, and entitled to leave on furlough, by giving up his holiday and pocketing the travelling expenses, which last, I found, was not unfrequently done at Nikolaefsk, by officers who had got into debt, and looked forward to furlough money as the means of getting them out of their difficulties.

for their work. We were favoured with his ready attention, and, on going to his house, found that the Governor of Chita, according to his promise, had requested him to make arrangements whereby I might visit the mines of Kara. They were 80 miles distant, and could be approached in summer by land only by a bridle-path. The other method was to row down the Shilka in an open boat.

But I was first to part with my interpreter, who was to return from this place, a day or two afterwards, in our poor old tarantass.* Before parting, there were sundry arrangements to make, and various things to send back with him, instead of my taking them round the remainder of the globe; but some of these I never saw again, for at one of the stations Mr. Interpreter's portmanteau was stolen, with my property in it. The only place at Stretinsk in which we could put up was a small building, dignified with the name of an hotel, consisting of a central chamber with a billiard table, and a room on either side—one set apart for women and the other for men. The sleeping accommodation

* He left it at Tiumen, where it still may be, for aught I know to the contrary; in danger, perhaps, of being immortalized, like another old "equipage," of which the following story is told. The Russians apply the term "equipage" to any vehicle, whether on wheels or runners, and whether drawn by horses, dogs, deer, or camels. The same word "equipage" is used in Russian, as in French, to denote a ship's crew. Accordingly, a few years after the disappearance of Sir John Franklin, the English Admiralty requested the Russian Government to make inquiries for the lost navigator along the coasts and islands of the Arctic Ocean. An order to that effect was sent to the Siberian authorities, and they in turn commanded all subordinates to inquire and report; whereupon a petty officer, somewhere in Western Siberia, was puzzled at the order to inquire concerning the English Captain, John Franklin, and his equipage. In due time, however, he reported, "I have made the proper inquiries. I can learn nothing about Captain Franklin, but in one of my villages there is an old sleigh that no one claims, which may be his equipage."

in the latter was a wooden seat running round the room—a very common arrangement still in many parts of Russia. They provided us food, however, and the place sufficed for unpacking and arranging our effects, of which I intended to take the light baggage with me, and leave my trunk, "hold-all," and boxes of books to follow by the steamer.

I was anxious to get forward as quickly as possible, for it was already Thursday morning, the 24th of July, and on Sunday evening the steamer was due to pick me up at Ust-Kara, and take me to the Amur. The colonel spared no pains to make things go smoothly. He had provided a boat used by the police, which I was to keep all the way, and not change at every station. He had also provided a Cossack who was to be my guard, servant, and attendant, and whom I asked the colonel positively to order not to leave me till he had delivered me safe into the hands of Colonel Kononovitch, the Commandant at Kara. The colonel smiled at my request, and undertook to see that my luggage was properly put on board the steamer, as also did Mr. Koch; and then, bidding farewell to the officer and to Mr. Interpreter, I embarked at three o'clock to float down the waters of the Shilka.

And now the world was before me, and that in a sense in which it had never been before. I was not only a stranger in a strange land, but penetrating a region where no English author had preceded me;*

* The names of several have been mentioned who crossed Siberia turning northwards to the Sea of Okhotsk, or southwards to China; some, too, as Captain Cochrane and Mr. Atkinson, reached Nertchinsk and the surrounding neighbourhood; but none went on to the Amur. Mr. Atkinson wrote a book of "Travels in the Region of the Upper and Lower Amur," but he did not see the goodly land; he only described it, getting his infor-

but I was far from disliking my new position. The weather was delightful, save that I rather feared sunstroke, and would fain have had a cabbage-leaf to put in my hat. The colonel had recommended some other antidote, but it was rendered unnecessary by the rising of clouds, from which there fell a few drops of rain. The Cossack had provided two oarsmen, so that I had nothing to do but to lean back in the boat, and enjoy the delightful way in which we glided down the stream. It was so pleasant, too, to miss the dust of the road and the jolting of the tarantass!

I could ask no questions, from the simple fact that none of my crew spoke anything but Russ, of which I had hardly learned a dozen words. I purposely did not spend time in mastering even the elements of the language, thinking that I should have an interpreter with me all the way, and not supposing that I should have any further use for my smatter after leaving the country. Moreover, the Russian alphabet of 36 letters is different from others used in Europe, and is certainly not inviting. I had very commonly found, among the upper classes of Russians, that I could get on by some means in French, German, or English. The post-

mation, probably, from the Russian officers who took part in the annexation of the country; and some of his illustrations, if I mistake not, from the Russian book of Maack, which has proved a storehouse also for subsequent writers.

Two American authors, however, had passed this way—Mr. Collins, who, in 1858, from Chita, floated down the Shilka, continuing the whole length of the Amur to Nikolaefsk; and Mr. Knox, who, bent on journalistic enterprise, made his way up the Amur from Nikolaefsk to Stretinsk. Unfortunately, I had neither of their works with me, nor had I the more scholarly volume of Mr. Ravenstein, whose production, though not that of an eye-witness, is far the best English work on the Amur, being largely compiled from the information given by those Russians who were the first scientific explorers of the country.

masters, who happened to be Jews, spoke German; and when this triglot mode of communication failed, I took to signs and dumb show—not always, however, with entire success.

At Tomsk, for instance, while Mr. Interpreter was "blowing up" the officials for allowing us to be sent on the wrong road, I was peacefully engaged in ordering the samovar and preparing for tea at the post-house. I wanted some eggs, for which, even if I had learned it, I had quite forgotten the Russian word, "*yaitsi*." The Russian who wanted an egg in England cleverly clucked like a hen, and was instantly understood; but this did not occur to me. I therefore walked into the back room, and, to the woman's astonishment, peeped into the cupboards and drawers, and examined the shelves; but to no purpose. I then bethought me of my artistic acquirements, and, taking out a pencil, drew on the wall an oval the size of an egg, and bade the woman look at *that;* but she was too dense to catch my meaning. At this juncture her husband entered, and I appealed to his masculine intelligence by pointing to the oval on the wall; but he could not "see" it. A happy thought then struck me, and I remembered that I had in my provision-basket an egg-cup. I took him accordingly into the guest-room, and showed it in triumph. But the man mistook it for a brandy-glass, and said to his wife, "Oh! it is *vodka* he wants." I had therefore to return to the charge, and took him into the yard, thinking to see a hen walking about; but they were gone to roost. So I pointed to a pigeon instead, but he perceived no connection between that and a hen's egg; nor, on second thoughts, did I. At last I saw in a corner some broken egg-shells, and, picking them up,

showed them, and effected my object. Further east, I lost a pocket-book containing some of my most important documents, and was compelled to go through a very serious conversation all in dumb show; but this I must not anticipate.

On the Shilka I experienced no inconvenience through not knowing Russ; for, on arriving at the first station, the Cossack went off for fresh oarsmen, and I aired my dozen words in ordering the *samovar*, which important word, together with *tarelka*, a plate; *chai*, tea; *voda*, water; *stakan*, a glass; *sakhar*, sugar; *khleb*, bread; and *maslo*, butter, I had thoroughly mastered. It was no part of my duty, I suppose, to feed my Cossack; for I observed he had brought with him black bread, but of course I offered him tea and other fare, to which he took very kindly, even to preserved meat, though he fought shy of anchovy paste, which probably he had never seen before.

Tea over, we left our first station, 17 miles from Stretinsk, for station number two, 14 miles distant. But on this stage one of our oarsmen was old and feeble, and I had insisted (by signs and motions) that an extra hand should be hired, and that the Cossack should be allowed to rest, which he did by curling himself up in the prow of the boat and going to sleep. In this state of things darkness came on, and eight o'clock, nine o'clock, and ten o'clock passed, and still we made only slow progress. At last, in spite of the remonstrances of the men, I took an oar myself, pulled away lustily till I had a warm jacket, and at eleven o'clock we arrived at the post-house of Uktich.

On entering the room a practical illustration was afforded us of the Oriental custom, "Take up thy

bed and walk." The people of the house, not expecting travellers, had occupied the guest-chamber,—one on the bedstead, another on the floor, and so on; but upon my entering, they snatched up the rugs or cloths upon which they were lying, and decamped with alacrity. In crossing Siberia we rarely saw a genuine bed in the houses of the peasantry, and the people do not usually, I believe, undress before going to sleep.*

Soon after five the next morning, I roused the Cossack, who had taken up his quarters on the floor of the guest-room, and by six we started for Botti and Shilkinsk, the third and fourth stations from Stretinsk; and, after sundry stoppages, at seven in the evening we finished our day's pull of 44 miles, and reached Ust-Kara, where Colonel Kononovitch was awaiting my arrival.

* Their favourite place for spending the night is on the top of the stove, which is sometimes raised at one end by brickwork to form a rest for the head. Before mounting this, they may perhaps take off their boots and an upper garment; but an Anglo-Russian lady has told me that, when living at Kertch, though she made it a condition, before a woman entered her service, that she should undress before going to bed, yet servants frequently transgressed; and that, as far as the men were concerned, they never took off their clothes but for the bath or to change them.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE PENAL COLONY OF KARA.

Evil reputation of Kara.—Testimony from Siberians and exiles.—My own experience.—The Commandant.—Our evening drive.—Hospitable reception.—Statistics respecting prisoners, their crimes, sentences, and settlement as "exiles."—The Amursky prison.—Cossack barracks.—The upper prison.—Convicts' food.—Prisoners' private laws.—Middle Kara prison.—Mohammedan forçats.—Sunday labour.—Convict clothing.—Guard-house.—A genuine political prisoner.—The church.—Lack of preaching.—House of the Commandant.

IN the penal colony of Kara I found more than 2,000 convicts, and a few political prisoners, together with some of their wives and families, a military staff, and some peasants. The penal institutions of this place are not so old as those of Nertchinsk; but, like them, they inherit a bad reputation. Mr. Atkinson appears to have been the first author to bring the place under the notice of English readers, doing so in no favourable terms, though he does not profess to speak as an eye-witness. Before I left England I was told that, if I did not intend to go east of the Baikal, I should see nothing but what might be witnessed in the prisons of London, and that I should get no idea of the real horrors of Siberian exile. This was said by a man who had worked in the mines of Nertchinsk, and he urged me by all means to see Kara.

Again, when we reached Siberia, and were travelling

on the Obi, my interpreter conversed with an officer in the prison service, whom he told that I had come to Siberia for the purpose of seeing its prisons. The officer expressed his doubts (as numbers of my English friends had done before) as to whether I should succeed in getting at the real state of the convicts in the mines and prisons; and he further mentioned three places where they had to work specially hard, namely, Alexandreffsky and Nertchinsk (about which I have spoken), and the third was Kara.

We met further east a gentleman who told me that his brother-in-law, a colonel, had given him sad accounts of the dreadful state of some of the prisons in Eastern Siberia. I was introduced to the said colonel, but a lengthy inquiry was productive of little more, on his part, than general statements, and I obtained only five lines for my note-book, the gist of them being that, when I asked for the very worst places—those in which I should find most horrors—one of the four places mentioned was Kara.

It is curious to notice that, of the four persons who spoke against Kara, not one of them (so far as I know) ever went there; and, with regard to Nertchinsk also, it is observable that the language of ear-witnesses respecting its mines is far stronger than the language of eye-witnesses, or even of those who suffered as prisoners. But I need dwell no longer upon what others have said, and may proceed to write of what I saw at Kara, where I was, if I mistake not, the first English visitor.

It was towards evening when our boat reached Ust-Kara. Pacing the river's bank was Colonel Kononovitch, the Commandant of the colony. I had been

delayed on the way, and he had been for some hours awaiting me, but a few words of explanation sufficed to make matters clear. My tongue, after an enforced silence of nearly 30 hours, was now released. We talked in French, and I soon discovered that I was addressing an officer of more than average intelligence. He took me into the police-master's house for some light refreshment, and to leave my heavy baggage, and then suggested that we should start on a drive of eight miles, so as to reach our destination before dark.

Our way lay over a stony road, through a wild valley, which, in the shades of evening, had a weird and out-of-the-world appearance. The ridges of the hills were irregular, and partially covered with conifers, while lower were deciduous shrubs and trees, though not of considerable dimensions. Among the rank and tall herbage were some late flowers, and an orange tiger-lily, about two feet high, that was strange to me. After we had driven a few miles, we came to a *détour* in the route, where the colonel proposed that we should clamber up a bank, and walk down to the road on the other side. From this elevation the landscape appeared wilder than ever, and the place looked like a natural prison, from which escape was impossible. There was not a habitation to be seen, and the consciousness that we were in the neighbourhood of so many "unfortunates," as they are called, gave me similar feelings to those with which I looked down on the forest-bound prison at Alexandreffsky.

As we drove along, and darkness crept on, there passed us labouring men returning from work, who saluted us. "Who," said I, "are they?" "They are

convicts," said the colonel. "Convicts!" said I; "how, then, are they loose?" "Oh," said he, "a large proportion of the condemned—perhaps half—live out of the prisons in their houses *en famille.** But they ought not to be out after dark." I then began to inquire respecting the crimes of the prisoners, and was informed that there were in the place about 800 murderers, 400 robbers, and 700 vagrants or "*brodiagi*"; and having been told what proportion of these were loose, I was not surprised to hear the colonel say that he usually avoided, if possible, being out at night. I approved his caution. Being very tired, moreover, and seeing that it was now dark, and that neither of us was armed, I was heartily glad to reach Middle Kara, the end of our drive.

Where I was to be quartered I did not know. There was no hotel in the place, or even a post-house, and I doubt if they could have offered me lodgings, as at Troitskosavsk, in the police-station. The commandant, however, had arranged everything for me, and I found that I was to occupy his own study. There he had prepared a neat, clean little bed; and as I looked around at the European comforts on the table, in the shape of writing materials and ornaments, it seemed like an arrival in the library of an English gentleman rather than the private bureau of the director of a penal colony.

* This is permitted after the expiration of two, four, six, or eight years (or nearly one-third of the punishment), to those who by good behaviour attain to a certain class. They still live on the spot and must work, and after a second period of this half-liberty, they are sent to a better place as exiles. Whilst in the former class they may be re-imprisoned for bad conduct, but not, I find, after they are set free to colonize (except for fresh crimes), as I have stated in my chapter on the exiles, vol. i., p. 35.

I wanted to get a thorough rest against the morrow, for we had a stiff programme before us. Moreover, the last bed I had occupied was nearly 600 miles away; and, with the exception of two nights, I had not taken off my clothes to sleep for exactly a month. But the colonel insisted first on giving me food, of which my prominent recollection is that it was tastefully served, and consisted of delicacies that had been out of reach for many a day, with tinned fruits, including pears that had made their way from America up the Amur. When at last I undressed, and stretched my limbs between a pair of sheets, I felt on excellent terms with my surroundings in general, and the colonel in particular. He was a fine-looking man, with intellectual tastes and an intelligent forehead, and neither smoked, drank, nor played cards,—a trio of virtues by no means always found in a Siberian official. The room was clean and sweet; quietness reigned around; and, uninterrupted by the rumbling of the tarantass or the noise of a post-house, I was left to sleep in peace.

I had been asked overnight whether next morning I should like a bath. Of course I jumped at the offer, having been able to get such a luxury but twice in Siberia. Accordingly, on waking, the colonel brought me a Turkish dressing-gown and bade me follow him. I thought, perhaps, he would lead the way to a bath-room, instead of which he opened the front door and marched me down the middle of his garden to a summer bathing-shed. Here I splashed about, then returned to my toilet and to breakfast.

Of course I asked all sorts of questions about the convicts, or, as they are called, "forçats," or *katorjniki*—prisoners condemned to forced labour. Their

number at Kara for four preceding years had been as follows:—

1875	1876	1877	1878	1879*
2,600	2,722	2,635	2,543	2,458.

Their classification according to crime is important, as throwing some light on the number of political prisoners, for whom, I was told, Kara is a special place of deportation, and I have heard that it has become more so since my visit. The only class where they could be included was under the heading "various," of whom there were 73; and this would suffice to include the politicals, respecting whose number I asked, and was told that it was 13 Russians and 28 Poles. I did not hear of any of the sects of dissenters in prison at Kara.†

As regards the sentences of the convicts, they were all, I believe, condemned to hard labour, either of the fabric or the mines—one year of work in the mines

* The colonel had not quite all the statistics to hand for 1879. Their number, therefore, at the time of my visit, was given me as 2,144, classified, according to their crimes, as follows :—

	Men.	Women.	Total.
Murderers	668	125	793
Robbers with violence	404	5	409
Incendiaries	29	9	38
For rape	22	—	22
Forgers	45	1	46
Offenders against discipline, and defaulters in public service	86	—	86
Vagabonds	665	12	677
Various	71	2	73
	1,990	154	2,144

† The only place where I met any of these in confinement was in the prison hospital at Tomsk, in which were three *Subbotniki*,—one of them a priest, and the others descendants of priests,—who were suffering from scorbutic disease, and who were in prison, I *think* I understood, for trying to propagate their creed; though, as this would seem to be contrary to

counting for a year and a half in the fabric. There were a few, chiefly "vagabonds," sentenced to Kara for life; but for such grave offenders even as parricides, fratricides, etc., 20 years was the extreme limit of their terms. The convicts are able to shorten their time, to some extent, by good conduct, and are set free to live as colonists, or, as they are then technically called, "exiles," or "*poselenetsi.*"*

Not all of the forçats at Kara, as already observed, were in prison, nor were those in close confinement placed all in one building, but in six, distributed over a distance about 15 miles long. Thus we left one behind at Ust-Kara, another about midway between the river and Middle Kara. At Middle Kara were one or two prison buildings, and in the opposite direction from the river were two more, the High Prison and the Amurski Prison, which last was eight miles distant from the commandant's house. To this last the colonel proposed to drive first, and then work back, taking the others in order; and this, after breakfast, we proceeded to do.

It was a beautiful morning when we started, and the

what I understood were now the laws respecting dissenters, it may be that I did not understand the whole case. Subbotniki are so called because they believe that we ought to keep *Subbota*, or Saturday, as the day of rest. They are said also to consider circumcision a binding ordinance, because it was to Abraham, the father of the faithful, that the Lord gave it, and Moses wrote, "in your generations *for ever.*" In some other respects, perhaps, such as purifications, they may further Judaize.

* The number of forçats who, after finishing their terms, were, by special order of the Government, distributed, as exiled colonists among he inhabitants of the provinces of Eastern Siberia, for the seven years preceding my visit, was as follows :—

1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878
176	193	134	167	290	472	672

—the last year thus showing a release of a third of the whole number I found under detention.

bright sun and the clear air gave a very different aspect to the valley from that of the preceding night. The dark hues of the conifers stood out well in contrast with foliage of lighter green, a stream was visible here and there, and immense forests bounded the horizon. We drove a pair of splendid horses that would have attracted attention in Rotten Row; and as we dashed along the road I perceived at its side wild currants and strawberries, raspberries, and wild peas, the apple, and the vine. The colonel pointed out a gold-mine as we proceeded, but I do not remember seeing any one there at work.

When we reached the Amurski prison, it proved to be a log building, of good pitch, and of a single storey. Most of the prisoners were out at work, but a few were engaged in whitewashing the rooms, which the colonel said was done at least four times a year. The wards were large sleeping-rooms, occupied for the greater part of the year only by night. There were no bedsteads, but a wide shelf, like that of a guard-room, ran round three of the walls; and on this they placed their large bags, for the making of which sacking was supplied to them, to serve the double purpose of clothes-bag and bed.

Near the prison were the summer barracks of a company of 150 Cossacks, a fourth of whom were replaced yearly. The barracks consisted of large canvas booths, with rows of beds arranged in the fashion of the summer hospitals. A school is provided in winter for the Cossacks, of whom rather more than a half read.

We next drove back to the *Verchne* (or upper) prison, a building much older than the one we had

left, having in the rooms an upper sleeping shelf resembling a loft, on which the prisoners sleeping would have the full benefit of the breathed air of their comrades below. The commandant saw this, and pointed out that it was an old and doomed building, and that in the new erections they were avoiding a repetition of the evil. In this prison were two solitary punishment cells, one of them being occupied on the morning of our visit for the first time in the colonel's experience.

Some prisoners, it seemed, might receive money, and some not. There was in this prison a Jew to whom 150 roubles a year were sent by friends. His family were living outside. They might bring him food, and were allowed to pay him at least a weekly visit.

We went into the kitchen, and I looked attentively at the scale of diet hung on the wall as in prisons in England.* The weight of the highest allowance in Siberia, as observed before, is far in excess (nearly double) of the highest English convicts' allowance, though for non-working prisoners in Siberia an abatement must be made for fast-days. The annual cost of provisions for each prisoner at Kara is 65 roubles 72¾ kopecks, or say £6 10*s*. The soup appeared

* It appeared that, when a man was working in the mines, he received daily 4 lbs. (Russian) of bread, 1 lb. of meat, ½ lb. of buckwheat, and a small piece of brick-tea (*kirpichny chai; kirpich* meaning a brick), amounting to a quarter of a brick per month. In winter they are given cabbage and potatoes. When a man was not working, he received 3 lbs. of bread, ½ lb. of meat, and ⅓ lb. of buckwheat. No *kvas* was provided at Kara except in the hospital. These allowances are given to the prisoners at Kara in kind, and not, as at Irkutsk, their value in money, which would not be so suitable, as I saw no shops at Kara, nor did I hear of any local committee to eke out the prisoners' money.

somewhat roughly served in small wooden tubs or bowls, but I presume that the place is too distant to allow of crockeryware being easily procured. Every prisoner provided his own spoon. Knives, as in most prisons, were forbidden.

We saw, lounging about this building, two or three men who seemed to have very little to do. They were called "*starostas*," that is, seniors or elders. Each ward of men in prison, and each gang of exiles on the march, chooses a starosta, who is their ruler and representative, the middle-man between them and the authorities. He receives the charities given them on the road, and pays and bribes the petty officers for little favours. He is, in fact, banker, purveyor, and general factotum to the body by whom he is elected. The authorities recognise this arrangement, exempt the starostas from labour, and through them deal with the prisoners rather than give their small orders direct. On behalf of the prisoners it is the starosta's duty to befriend them, and see that they have the proper amount of food, and whatever else may be their due; whilst, on behalf of the authorities, should anything go wrong with the prisoners, the starosta is held responsible.* The office, however, at Kara, notwithstanding its privileges and exemptions, is by no means coveted; and the men, rather than be unoccupied, though it be to rule, prefer to work and to serve.

* Thus the prisoners make laws for themselves and invest their seniors with a good deal of power. In this matter there is "honour among thieves." I was told, for instance, that east of Tomsk the sentinels ask an oath of the prisoners that they will not attempt to escape, and then give them certain liberties. My informant said that he had sometimes met gangs of prisoners alone, their sentinels having stayed behind to drink at a public-house. When a general promise has been thus given, should one dare to run away, he is pursued by the others, and when

In the prison at Middle Kara was a considerable number of Tatars. Why they were unoccupied I know not, unless it happened to be a bath-day, which is a holiday, and recurs twice a month; or, again, it may have been one of the Mohammedan festivals, some of the greater of which they are allowed to observe, though not the Friday in every week. Nor are the Jewish prisoners allowed to rest on their Sabbath, nor Christians on the Sunday. It might possibly be argued, in justification of this, that Sunday is not usually observed at any of the Siberian gold-mines; but, however that may be, I thought this robbing the hard-labour prisoners of their day of rest the most cruel and unjust thing in their lot. A greater than a Russian Tsar gave to man the Sabbath, and to take it away from him is, to my mind, nothing less than a sin and a shame.*

Near the prison at Middle Kara was a storehouse, to which we mounted by a flight of outside steps. It contained a quantity of material for prisoners' clothing —coarse linen for shirts and summer trousers, felt for coats, and leather for shoes and gloves; also a number of made-up garments. A pair of summer shoes or slippers was valued at 3*s.*, and a coat of felt at 12*s.* A pair of gloves, such as the prisoners use in the mines, was given me as a keepsake. I have added them to

caught is thrashed, or loaded, according to M. Andreoli, with a sack of earth tied on his back. I have even heard of a gang of exiles sentencing one of their number to death for the breach of some law of their own making, the sentence being carried out of course unknown to the authorities—such cases, I presume, being very rare.

* The only days at Kara on which men are supposed not to work are three days at Christmas, New Year's Day, three days before Lent, three days at Easter, and certain imperial birthdays, making in all 15 days in the year, and the first and fifteenth day of each month for the bath. There are other days when, as a matter of fact, for various reasons, they do not work; but I am speaking of the rule.

my prison curiosities, collected in various parts of the world, comprising fetters, whip, handcuffs, specimens of prison labour, and a variety of other lugubrious objects.

There was likewise a guard-house at Middle Kara. In it I observed, as I had done at Tobolsk, that the furniture and arrangements for the soldiers were not at all better than for the prisoners. From information respecting soldiers' food received later, I make no doubt the rations of the Cossack guards are less ample than those provided for the labouring convicts: and I am persuaded that under some circumstances, dear liberty excepted, the Cossacks are more to be pitied than their prisoners. Thus, when a gang of exiles comes at night to an étape, they can lie down and rest, whereas the Cossacks have to mount guard.

In this building, opening out of the central room guarded by soldiers, were a few (perhaps half-a-dozen) separate cells, through the doors of which no one could pass without being seen by the Cossacks. These cells were evidently inner prisons, in which were kept those whose escape was especially to be prevented. I entered two of them. The first was not quite so wide, but about the length and rather higher than the cell of an English prison, measuring perhaps five feet wide by eight long and ten high, and occupied by a Tatar gentleman, with his rosary of a hundred beads in hand, with nothing to do.

On entering the second cell, occupied by a political prisoner, just then at work in the mines, I had at last lighted upon the dwelling-place of one of a class about whom such harrowing stories have been told—a genuine political prisoner of high calibre, and a Jew to wit, undergoing the full sentence of punishment in the mines of

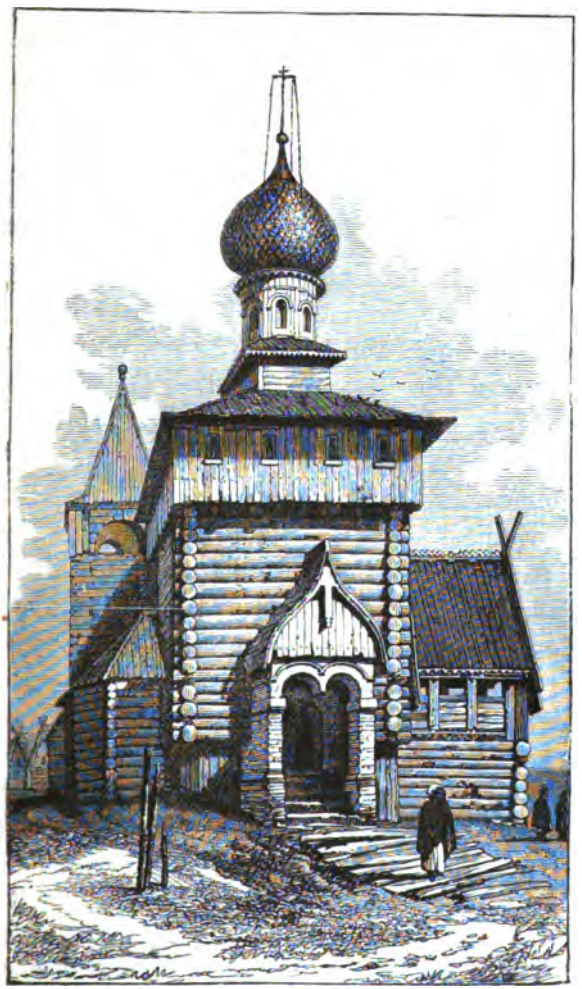
Siberia. This meant, in his case, that he had to labour in summer very much like a navvy, from six in the morning till seven in the evening, with certain hours for rest and meals; but in the winter he frequently had nothing to do. His wife was living near, and might see him twice a week. But his cell was that which struck me most. Compared to the criminal wards in

TATAR GENTLEMAN EXILE IN WINTER DRESS.

the other prisons, this was a little parlour. It was clean, and in a manner garnished—not, indeed, in the fashion of a cell at San Francisco, where I found a "boss" painter condemned for life, and who had decorated his cell from floor to ceiling, as if intending to remain there for the rest of his days (this would have been out of keeping with Russian ideas); but

the Kara prisoner had certain articles of furniture and eating requisites, the placing and arrangement of which indicated familiarity with the habits of decent society, and showed the prisoner to be above the common herd. One of his books I found was a treatise on political economy, which may be noted in connection with the remark of Goryantchikoff in his "Buried Alive," who asserts that in his prison no book was allowed but the New Testament. The room certainly was not large, but there was abundance of light, the outlook from the long window being not on a prison wall surrounded by chevaux-de-frise, but commanding a view of the Kara valley such as a Londoner might envy; whilst just outside was the public road, along which could be seen everything that passed. I speak only truth when I say that, if I had the misfortune to be condemned to prison for life, and had my choice between Millbank in London or this political's cell at Kara, I would certainly choose the latter.

Between the guard-house and the residence of the colonel was a collection of buildings and store-houses, called "Middle" Kara. Among these was the church, the priest of which was the only chaplain I could hear of for the prisoners. He practised photography in addition to his ecclesiastical calling, and although he probably needed every rouble he gained thereby—and I certainly ought not to revile him, since by his means the colonel was able to present me with some views of the colony—yet it would have rejoiced me to hear that he was doing something worthy of his position for the spiritual good of the convicts. The pastoral superintendence, frequent services, and preaching to prisoners, as carried on in English prisons, is unheard of at Kara.



RUSSIAN VILLAGE CHURCH.

and I gathered that the convicts attended church only twice a year.*

* This may be noticed in connection with a statement of the author of "The Russians of To-day" (p. 231), who says: "Once a week a pope—himself an exile—goes down into the mines to bear the consolations of religion, under the form of a sermon enjoining patience." I suspect

I may here mention that the religious scruples of Siberian exiles are to some extent respected. Thus, for the Jewish prisoners to be obliged to eat food prepared by Gentiles would be an abomination. In the prison at Tiumen we were informed that 42 Jews, who had been confined there during the previous winter, had been placed together in a ward, with a separate cooking-place, in which they prepared their food canonically. So, too, a similar arrangement had been observed with 71 Mohammedans; and I have just remarked that there were many of this religion together, in the prison at Middle Kara, who were allowed, within certain limitations, the exercise of their religious observances. I have already said that we met a Protestant pastor who made periodical visits to the prisons and mines; and on the Amur I travelled with a Roman Catholic priest, from Nikolaefsk, who was returning from a lengthened tour along the river, which doubtless included visits to his co-religionists in confinement.

After seeing Middle Kara our morning's inspection was over. We had driven 15 miles, and as there were prisons in the opposite direction, extending over the same length of country, it will be seen that for the colonel to pay a visit to all his Kara prisons involved

that the poor fellows would be only too thankful to have the opportunity once a week of listening to a sermon upon patience or any other subject! Moreover, the number of sermons given by our author to his prisoners is exceedingly liberal (52 in the course of the year), seeing that in an ordinary church in Petersburg or Moscow the number does not usually exceed half-a-dozen. I have seen it stated that properly there should be 12, but, in Siberia, on my asking the grandson of a metropolitan how often his father preached, he told me "five or six times a year," and after many inquiries I never heard of but one priest in the empire, though, of course, there may be others, who preached, or rather read, a sermon every week.

a drive, in all, of 30 miles, which I understood he accomplished at least once a week; and he had also, I believe, another penal institution to inspect, called Alexandreffsky Zavod, at a still greater distance. His salary was £330 per annum, and an unpretentious house, his perquisites, perhaps, making up his income to £400. In his yard was a good bath-house and offices, and an enclosure with a couple of wild deer, caught and kept for his children.

At dinner I was introduced to Madame Kononovitch, who was considerably younger than her husband. They had married at Irkutsk, which to a Siberian is Paris. It was not greatly to be wondered at, therefore, if she found Kara somewhat dull. The society of the place was very limited. There were the families of the officers and the wives of a few gentle or noble prisoners, but these latter of course could be received into the colonel's house only with a certain amount of reserve. The servants were, I suppose, all of them exiles, but the dinner was well served. I remember nothing of the food, save that the colonel had made a successful effort to get me a plate of wild strawberries. The season (July 26th) was now late, and they were the last I ate in Siberia. Madame spoke French well, and, as their children were growing up, she and her husband were interested in their education, and made many inquiries concerning our methods of teaching in England. The colonel then requested me to send him some English books; and soon after dinner we started for the hospital, the orphanage, and one of the mines.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CONVICT MINES OF KARA.

Gold-mines not underground.—Hours of labour.—Visit to a mine.—Punishments.—Branding abolished.—Miners marching off.—Statistics respecting runaways.—Women criminals at mines.—A new building for expected politicals.—Superannuated forçats.—The hospitals.—"Birching" and its effects.—Kara in 1859.—Improvements effected by Colonel Kononovitch.—A children's home.—Return to the gold-mine.—Comparison of Siberian and English convicts.—Distribution of books.

AS I had visited the mine of the Archangel Gabriel near Krasnoiarsk, I was in some measure prepared what to expect in the gold-mines of Kara. It was not easy, however, to get rid of a preconceived notion attaching to Siberian mines, that the convicts *must* be working underground, for I had entered the country with ideas such as those expressed by the author of "The Russians of To-day." *

But now that I have been to the convict gold-mines, I have, happily, no such horrors to relate. All the gold-mining is done aboveground. The season begins

* He says (p. 229): "They never see the light of day, but work and sleep all the year round in the depths of the earth, extracting silver or quicksilver under the eyes of taskmasters, who have orders not to spare them. Iron gates guarded by sentries close the lodes, or streets, at the bottom of the shafts, and the miners are railed off from one another in gangs of twenty. They sleep within recesses hewn out of the rock—very kennels—into which they must creep on all fours."

on the 15th February, and ends on the 15th November, and they work 13 hours a day, excepting certain hours for refreshment and rest. I suppose, however, both the length of the season and of their daily labour must be to some extent modified by the rigour of the frost and the duration of the light. During the three winter months the ground is frozen, and they are mostly unemployed.

The visiting of the mine at Kara was far from pleasant. It was like walking into a large gravel-pit, from 20 to 30 feet deep. In this pit 198 men were at work, some removing the roots, stones, and surface-earth, and others carting off the gold-bearing sand to the washing machine. The miners were surrounded with a cordon of armed sentries, as at Portland prison. A large number of the convicts had irons on their legs; this, however, was something special to a particular prison, and was inflicted for two months as a punishment for aiding and abetting the escape of four comrades.*

A certain measure of earth was allotted to the men as each day's labour. A released Pole, who had been at Kara, though he did not work in the mines, told me it was a 7-feet cube to three men. This he allowed to be less than the quantity worked by free labourers. He said these latter had the help of horses and were better fed, but there were 70 horses in the mine I visited at Kara, and the reader may judge, from what has been said, whether or not the miners' food was sufficient. So far, therefore, the Siberian convicts

* According to the law of 1857 (Article 569), it appears that irons are worn during the time a prisoner is in the lowest category (or during probation time), after which they are continued as follows: for one condemned for life, 8 years: from 15 to 20 years, 4 years: from 12 to 15 years, 2 years: from 6 to 8 years, 18 months; and from 4 to 6 years, 12 months.

at Kara did not appear to be worked harder than—I should think not so hard as—our own at Portland.

I asked what was done to them if they did not fulfil their tasks, and was told that they were punished first by privation, and, if that did not suffice, by corporal chastisement with rods. Kara, I heard subsequently, is one of three places in Siberia where the *troichatka* or "plète" is in use. The colonel described it as a whip with three ends, of which, for serious offences, any number up to 20 stripes might be given; but, he said, he rarely used it, cases of insubordination being usually met by seclusion, irons, less food, or delay of removal to a higher class, which last might mean, in some cases, the virtual prolongation of a sentence for a couple of years.

The branding of prisoners is no longer practised. There were two or three veterans at Kara, one of whom, at my request, was brought to me, and whose cheeks and forehead were marked with the letters KAT, an abbreviation of *Katorjnik*, a convict. This man had been marked in 1863, and the letters presented a tattooed appearance, though the operation of tattooing must be the more severe, since it is slowly done by hand, whereas, in the case of the prisoners, the brand was done by a kind of cupping instrument, or stamp, furnished with small points, which, on being tapped, pierced the skin. A liquid was then rubbed on, and so the convict was tattooed for life. I just missed seeing one of these instruments at Nikolaefsk, where it had been recently sold as a curiosity.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the mine at Kara; and by the time we had looked round, and gone among the miners, the hour arrived for

leaving off work; the drum sounded, and the convicts formed in line, some of them shouldering tools, and what looked like stretchers for carrying loads of earth between two bearers. Their heavy tools were put in carts to be drawn by horses, and all marched under guard to their prison, five miles off. This walk, therefore, to and fro must in this instance be added to their day's labour; but I noticed that, when the convicts walked out of the mine, the free labourers continued working, and did so for some hours afterwards.

Before the miners started, their numbers were called, for prisoners sometimes attempt to remain in the mine all night for the purpose, it may be, of washing earth secretly to secure a little gold, or, more frequently, with a view to escape. If it be spring-time, a runaway may succeed, during the summer, in getting a long way off, and, as winter comes on, give himself up, be imprisoned as a vagrant or vagabond, and, the following spring, be fortunate enough, perchance, to make his escape again, and so get towards Europe. Sometimes they manage to obtain forged passports, and travel as free men. At other times the escaped gather in bands, and roam about the country. It is, in fact, by no means uncommon to meet escaped prisoners on the roads, but they are not spoken of as malicious. They are not like banditti. They will sometimes steal a chest of tea from the hindmost vehicle of a caravan, or, indeed, run off with horse, cart, and all; but they do not usually attack travellers. The runaways beg food of the peasantry, who, of course, by law, ought not to aid them; so they compromise matters by placing food on their window-sills at night, ostensibly with the charitable purpose of

helping passers-by in distress. They thus avoid conflict with the authorities, and do not anger the convicts, who might otherwise do them mischief, especially by setting the house on fire.

The half-liberty given to convicts after a period of good behaviour presents a loophole for escape, of which many hundreds avail themselves.* These escaped convicts are known as "*Brodiagi*," or "roaming gentry." They wander about, guided through the forests by marks left by the natives and preceding runaways. There are some places, it is said, where they can live without fear. M. Réclus goes so far as to say that sometimes the authorities, in times of difficulty, or when ordinary labourers fail, call in the help of "vagabonds," with the tacit understanding that they will not ask for their passports, whereupon hundreds emerge from the surrounding forests and present themselves for employment. I am not able to confirm this from my own experience as regards the authorities.

* The number of "forçats" who, living free, ran away from Kara and escaped the control of the authorities for 15 years preceding my visit, is as follows: 1864, 327; 1865, 448; 1866, 369; 1867, 402; 1868, 354; 1869, 266; 1870, 483; 1871, 326; 1872, 368; 1873, 585; 1874, 321; 1875, 242; 1876, 175; 1877, 256; 1878, 194.

Thus it will be seen that in 1869 there ran away a smaller number than in any preceding year, namely, 266, whereas in the following year, 1870, there ran away 483. This great difference was accounted for by the fact that up to 1869 the prisoners were under the "administration of the mines," and when they were passed over to the new administration of the Minister of the Interior, this at first gave much dissatisfaction. Again, in 1873, the number of escapes rose to the highest, namely, 585, during which year it appeared the quantity of provisions was lessened; whilst, on the other hand, in 1875, the number of escapes being so low, less than in any preceding year, namely, 175, was accounted for by there having been in that year a building committee, which gave wages to certain of the convicts for their work. Up to 1st July of the year of my visit, 155 had escaped.

but I met with a private firm who had in their employ several men without their "papers."

When marched out of the Kara mine, those in the higher category are free to go to their families. I saw, too, near the Cossack barracks, a dwelling in course of erection for those who were living half-free, but in which they were to sleep at night. Those in the lower category are taken to their respective prisons, and may sleep, if they choose, in summer from nine o'clock till five, and in winter from seven till seven.

I looked in at a prison, near the colonel's house, just before the men were going to rest. I do not remember that there were any lights, and the place was gloomy enough; but I suspect that it must be more so during the long nights of winter. At Tiumen I observed but one small candlestick in a room for 65 prisoners,—light enough to make the darkness visible. In this respect my testimony is of limited value, as my visits were paid by day, but I can readily believe Goryantchikoff's dismal description of the foul air and gloom of a Siberian prison by night. Whether the majority of prisoners, however, would wish for a constant and plentiful supply of oxygen I am not sure. They certainly do not provide for it in their own houses, any more than do some of the poorer classes in England.

I have said nothing yet of the female prisoners at the mines of Kara. Russian women look upon prison life from very different points of view. I met a lady in Petersburg who visited the female wards in the prisons, and she told me that on one occasion a woman, on being brought back to her cell for the fourth or fifth time, found the arrangement of its furniture

altered, whereupon she asked that her bed might be put "in the place where she always slept"; whilst another, a worthy old soul, on entering her cell, turned to the ikon and thanked God that her old age was so well provided for! This, of course, is very different from the picture of Siberian female prison life represented in "The Russians of To-day" (p. 230):—

"Women are employed in the mines as sifters, and get no better treatment than the men. Polish ladies by the dozen have been sent down to rot and die, while the St. Petersburg journals were declaring that they were living as free colonists; and, more recently, ladies connected with Nihilist conspiracies have been consigned to the mines in pursuance of a sentence of hard labour." I neither heard nor saw anything of women labouring *in* the mines, and one of my released exile informants, from Nertchinsk, says that it is not true that women work *in* the mines in getting the mineral. At Kara there were 154 female prisoners to more than 2,000 men; and since the latter have a clean shirt every week, it would seem likely that the women may be employed in laundries and work-rooms, only that I am under the impression the prisoners wash their own linen. Five out of every six of the women convicts at Kara, dismal to relate, were murderesses, and walking between 58 of them in their prison at Ust-Kara was not pleasant. Some had babies, and most of the mothers had murdered their husbands. Husband-murder seemed to me painfully frequent in Russia, for which, in the fifteenth century, they had a barbarous punishment: the murderess was buried alive up to the neck, and left to the hungry dogs!

Near this women's department was a new cellular

building of wood, recently erected. I notice this particularly because of its bearing upon the number of political exiles that are supposed to be *imprisoned* in Siberia. The spring of 1879, it will be remembered, was a time of great excitement in Russia. An attempt was made upon the life of the Tsar, the great cities of the empire were placed under military command, and the journals talked of troops of prisoners being sent off to Siberia. And this was true, only they were not troops of *political* prisoners. A telegram, however, was sent from Petersburg to the telegraph office at Kara, enjoining the commandant to prepare places for a certain number of prisoners about to be dispatched. But the number prepared for was not very great after all, for, as far as I remember, it did not exceed 20 or 30 at most; so that if the convoys of 29 prisoners, whom my interpreter met in returning, were all destined for Kara, as he heard they were, then this small prison would be filled, and it might, in a sense, be called "a State prison." When, therefore, in a previous chapter, I ventured to say there was, with one exception, no prison in Siberia that could be called a political or State prison, this was the exception in my mind. *

Of course I entered this little prison and looked at the cells. They were ranged on either side of a roomy oblong space, in which were two stoves. The chief fault I had to find with the cells was that they were

* After leaving Kara I heard that the number of political prisoners to be transported there was considerably augmented; but I have it on good authority that even then the number expected did not exceed 60. The most recent information I have received, since the Emperor's assassination, goes on to say that as Nertchinsk was made the special place of deportation for the Poles after 1863, so Kara has been made the special place for Nihilists; but I have no official information to that effect.

very small, and lighted, I think, only from the lobby within, the area of each cell being certainly smaller than that of the cells in Coldbath Fields, though I am not sure that they were smaller than those at Portland, nor do I remember how they compared with ours for height. If, therefore, the prisoners were to work by day, as do ours at Portland, perhaps the cells at Kara were not too small. For my own part, I would rather inhabit one of them in solitude by night than be turned in among the motley crew of the larger prisons.

There were convicts at Ust-Kara, however, in a plight more pitiable than those confined in the political cells, or who had to work in the mines. I allude to the occupants of two or three wards in an old weather-beaten, smoke-dried, low-pitched building, in which were confined a number of old men, perhaps from 30 to 50 in number, who were not ill in such sense as to be patients in the hospital, but who were condemned to prison for life, or who, though too old to work, had not served their time.

I do not remember any sight in Siberia that so touched me as this. To see scores of able-bodied men pent up in wards with nothing to do was bad, to hear the clanking of their chains was worse, though many of them were burly fellows who could carry them well. More touching still were the convoys of exiles with faithful and innocent women following their husbands; but to see these old men thus waiting for death was a most melancholy picture. The doctor inspects the convicts once a month, and determines upon those who are past work, who, in the absence of any specific disease, are then brought into these wards for the remainder of their lives. To release them, the colonel

pointed out, would be no charity, because, being too old to work, and being out of the near range of poor-houses or similar institutions, they would simply starve. And thus they were left in confinement for a Higher Power to set them free. They lounged in the prison and in the yard, and some sat near a fire, though it was a sunny day in July. One old man was pointed out who had attained to fourscore years, and another had reached the age of ninety, and so on. The difficult breathing of one, however, the wheezing lungs of a second, and the hacking cough of a third, proclaimed in prophetic tones that their time was short; and one wished them a softer pillow for a dying head than a convict's shelf in a prison ward. Their building was one of the oldest in the place, and was doomed to be pulled down within a month.

There were two hospitals at Kara; one near the house of the commandant, at Middle Kara, containing, at the time of my visit, 43 patients; and the other at Ust-Kara, with 93 patients.* By the time the exiles have reached Kara they have trudged nearly 1,000 miles, and have been lodged, after leaving Moscow, in about 200 étapes and prisons. Many, of course, die on the route, but I have no official statistics upon this point. A released exile told me that, as far as he

* This gave a sick-list of 136 to a population of upwards of 2,000 exiles and 1,000 Cossacks; besides, I suppose, the surrounding peasants. The number of convicts who died in the Kara hospitals from 1872 was as follows:—

1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878
108	287	152	55	118	117	90,

and the number for 1879, up to the 1st July, was 65.

At Tiumen the number on the sick-list was 19 out of 1,113 prisoners on the day of our visit. The number of sick prisoners, out of 20,711 passing through Tiumen in 1878, was 1,562, of whom 1,246 were cured, 280 died, and 44 remained in hospital.

remembered, it was in his day about 16 per cent With the survivors the fatigue of the march, together with deficiencies or irregularities of nourishment, and the bad atmosphere in some of the prisons, often induces scorbutus or scurvy. The colonel said that with bathing twice a day, and with good food, they are soon cured; and, though many arrive sick in April, they are commonly well before autumn. In winter they have fewer patients generally, and commonly no cases of scorbutus at all.

We visited the hospital at Middle Kara on the Saturday afternoon. It was a fine building, with large, lofty, and airy rooms, which were clean, and decked with boughs of birch and coniferous trees, placed in the corners, not merely for ornament, but with the idea that the odour given off by them is salubrious. I saw the same thing on a large scale in the prison hospital at Tomsk; and upon my asking in one of the prisons at Ust-Kara why a large branch of cypress was placed there, they said it was for the sake of the smell.

In the Siberian hospitals, at the head of every bed was hung a board, with the occupant's name written in Russian, and the name of the disease, written in Roman letters, in Latin; and as this was the only part of the writing I could read, I used generally to run my eye over the diseases in the wards. A remark made thereon caused the doctors sometimes to ask if I had studied medicine, which unfortunately I had not. Hence I was nonplussed at the word "costegcetis," written over a man's bed, and of which I asked an explanation, whereupon I was told that the man, who had been the ringleader in aiding the recent escape of the runaways, had been birched with 100 stripes of the rod, and the

he was consequently in hospital for recovery. Whether the effects of a birching are very serious I do not clearly make out, but I met at least two cases in which the recipients of the rod made fun of it. One was that of a servant in a house where I stayed. She was a convict, and therefore liable, in case of misconduct, to be sent by her mistress to the police to be birched, as in bygone days had been more than once done with her; but she did not fear the switches, saying they would not *kill* her: "they did indeed make one a little sore, but that was of no consequence!"

I saw only one suffering in this way at Kara; and the colonel told me, as already stated, that though he rarely used the whip, yet that he did not choose to be trifled with. It was manifest that he could not maintain discipline among 2,000 convicts if he did, yet I met with no prison official in Siberia who seemed so judiciously to line with velvet the glove of steel as did Colonel Kononovitch. The whole place bore about it marks of the superintendence of a man who conscientiously acted from a high sense of duty.

I have already mentioned what an unenviable reputation Kara had in former days. An old sea captain, with whom I stayed, told me he paid a visit to Kara in 1859, when there were 2,000 men branded, and chained to their barrows by night and by day. The overseer of the gold-mines, a German, told him that he had shot four men who had killed others when at work; and I have heard, since my return, that some of the predecessors of Colonel Kononovitch were so cruel that the mention of their names made convicts tremble. It is not, then, greatly to be wondered at that this evil reputation has descended to later days.

But Colonel Kononovitch had effected great improvements. It has already been pointed out that many of the Siberian prisons were old and dilapidated, but that reforms were expected yearly to take place; and, there being no money forthcoming, things were allowed to go on as best they could. It was under this condition of affairs that the colonel was appointed to Kara, with its crazy buildings, some of which had been pulled down only a few days before my arrival. I saw one or two that were yet standing. Of course he applied for funds to meet the expenses of new buildings so urgently needed, but received only the stock answer with a polite bow that there were insufficient funds, and that they could not expend money on prisons whilst waiting for reforms; whereupon the average Siberian official might have allowed things to drift, but not so the colonel! The reforms he knew had been talked of for 15 years, and he commenced a number of "economies," by which, if money were not forthcoming from one quarter, it might be obtained from another.*

In this way he might quietly have pocketed £1,200 a year, and if in Russian fashion he had handed round

* Thus the Government allowed him 4*s.* 6*d.* per sajen for 8,000 sajens of wood for fuel, which, instead of buying, he procured by sending his unemployed miners into the forest to cut, giving them, to their great satisfaction, a small payment, and effecting a saving of 1*s.* per sajen. A year's economy, therefore, in wood brought him £400. He found, too, by being his own timber-merchant, he could procure a log from 20 ft. to 30 ft. long for 7½*d.*, for which dealers would have made him pay 2*s.* Then, again, the Government allowed him 7½*d.* per pood for 7,000 poods of hay, instead of buying which he sent his prisoners into the neighbouring valleys to cut three times the normal quantity. Part of this was for feeding the horses he had already, and the rest for feeding others he added in order that he might be his own carrier, and so save the contract for carriage.

hush money, all might probably have been smooth enough. But so did not the colonel, and he pointed out some of the improvements he had been able to effect by these economies.*

The subordinate officials at Kara are very scantily paid, the chief of each prison receiving £70 a year, and his inferior officer £24. When at Tomsk, we heard of prison officials still lower, under each of whom were placed 30 prisoners, but who received only £6 a year and their food and accommodation, which were similar to those of the prisoners. It is not, therefore, greatly to be wondered at if these petty officers are not above misappropriating some of the prisoners' food, or taking bribes. Colonel Kononovitch encouraged these men to engage in trade, or to keep horses, in which case he employed them in carrying or other ways, so long as they did not rob the prisoners.

But other substantial good was effected; for during the previous two years and a half the colonel, chiefly, I understood, by his economies, had erected no less than 18 buildings, for which the governor of the province complimented him highly. †

The colonel, moreover, did not spend his savings wholly on prisoners, or restrict his efforts to what

* He paid each of the convicts, as perquisites, 4*d.* per sajen for the wood they cut, increased their allowance, and if, at the end of a job, all had gone well, he gave them each 1½*d.* a day extra. This helped the poor fellows to get sundry little extras, especially tobacco, which was encouraged; for the colonel, though he did not smoke himself, yet had imbibed the notion that it was good for the health of the prisoners.

† I understood at the time that these buildings had been erected entirely out of savings; but I have since been told that, from 1877 to 1879 there was granted, for the erection of prisons in Nertchinsk, the sum of £17,500, a part of which was destined for Kara.

might be strictly called his duty. He exceeded that, and allowed his justice to enlarge into benevolence. After seeing the hospital he took me to a children's home which he had built for boys whose fathers were in prison.*

The building was simple, but prettily situated within an enclosure, where was the best kitchen-garden I had seen in Siberia. In a green-house and a hot-house were growing melons, and I know not what. These the colonel said he sold for the good of the concern, and the money obtained for vegetables helped to pay the expenses of the school. The schoolmaster was an exile, and had been, I suspect, of good position from what I heard about him after I had left the place. The children were assembled for me to see, and I was tempted to act the schoolmaster and put to them some questions, but it was under difficulties of a polyglot character; and by the time my ideas had filtered twice through Russian, French, and English, the children's answers were not very clear. Everything looked clean and orderly, and, what was better, there were about the place tokens of care and sympathy. Behind the house was a natural shrubbery, enclosed from the forest. In this a pavilion was erected, in which, from time to time, the commandant brought his wife and family to drink tea with the children, when the boys who had sisters in the colony might meet them, and where the humanizing influence of kindness was allowed to flow forth.

* The house had cost £200; and he informed me that for another £100 he could put up a house for girls, of whom there were 20 about the place, whose fathers were prisoners. About £4 10s. per year was allowed by Government for each child, and to educate, clothe, and care for them as the colonel was doing costs about £5 a year extra for each; and this money he raised, I understood, among his friends.

By the time we had seen the school the day was far spent, and I was desirous to return to the mine to witness the final washing of the sand. During the day there had been worked (I presume by convicts and freemen together) 30 sajens, or, as they put it, 30,000 poods of sand. The produce of the first half of the day had been taken out of the machine; and after the convicts had left the mine, a few workmen remained washing the sand, in which at length the gold was found together with black dust of iron.*

The number of men who had stayed for the last of the washing was less than a dozen, and there was a certain gravity manifested by the little group as they took their places round the wooden apron on which was pushed up and down the few handfuls of mineral that remained of 240 tons that had passed through the cylinder. Darkness came on, so that they had to light torches of pine. There stood the colonel, looking on with dignity. The Cossack, too, was there, with loaded rifle, to protect the gold. The wooden scraper pushed away at the sand, and then the brush, and there was left only the gold and iron, less than half a pint.

* The Government determines how much gold is to be washed in the season. In 1878 it was 25 poods, or 900 lbs. They told me that the average they were finding for the season of 1879 was ¾ of a zolotnik of gold to every 100 poods of sand, and that none of the mines about Kara yield more than one zolotnik to the 100 poods; also that the strata of gold sand are never more than seven feet, but usually less in thickness. I have already stated in an earlier chapter, only in different figures, that whilst 5 zolotniks to the 100 poods is considered good, 1 zolotnik to the same quantity is poor. Hence it is apparent that no private company would work the mines of Kara, and the Government do so only to provide penal employment at a reduced cost to the State. There are at Kara certain mines spoken of as belonging to the Emperor's private purse. When the convicts work in these, the Minister of the Interior is paid for their labour according to the amount of work they do. This I understood to be an economical arrangement in favour of the Emperor.

This was put in the miniature frying-pan, dried over an extempore fire, and then placed in a tin can. It was given into my hand that I might feel its weight, which I judged to be about a pound, and, if so, worth £40. The can was then given to the Cossack, who mounted his horse, and, accompanied by an escort, took it off to the treasury.

And thus ended the day. That the men who worked in the mines had no easy task was plain, but it was equally plain that their labour, as compared with that of an English navvy or convict, was nothing extraordinary. The tread-wheel is unknown to them. Foreigners speak with horror of Siberian punishments, to which, as a set-off, I may mention that a Russian lady asked me, with a shudder, whether it could possibly be true that in England we placed prisoners on a wheel, on which, if they did not continue to step, it broke their legs! Comparing Siberian convicts with English,* the Siberian has the advantage in more food (which perhaps the climate may require), more intercourse with his fellows, and far more permissions to receive visits from his family. The Kara convict, when in the

* Unfortunately my Siberian statistics are not sufficiently complete to allow a comparison between the *numbers* of English and Russian convicts. "O. K." points out that since 1860, out of a population of 84,000,000, Russia has had on an average 20,000 criminals a year; whilst England and Wales, out of little more than a quarter of that population, has annually 12,000 criminal convictions. I am afraid that it is not satisfactory to *compare* these figures, because the 20,000 Russian criminals does not include, I presume, those left in prisons west of the Urals, but only those sent to Siberia; and, again, 12,000 does not nearly cover the total number of criminals in England and Wales. In the borough and county jails of England and Wales there was, in 1878, a daily average of 19,818 prisoners, besides 10,208 in convict prisons. I think, however, I am right in estimating that there is not a daily average of 10,000 convicts in the *prisons* of Siberia.

higher category, receives besides 15 per cent. of what he earns for the Government; and even in the lower category he is credited with the money, though its payment is deferred till he mounts higher. Political prisoners also may write to their friends; and though by strict right, I believe, criminals in Siberia cannot do so, yet this rule is not carried out, or is as often honoured in the breach as in the observance.

The following day was Sunday, and happened to be the colonel's name's-day. This kept him at home for the morning to receive visitors. A telegram came to felicitate him from Madame's father, from Ekaterineburg, a distance of 3,000 miles, taking 30 hours in transit. As the visitors did not speak French, I was not introduced, and had a comparatively quiet time to arrange and digest the information I had received. Later, I unfolded to the colonel my plan of distributing the Scriptures throughout Siberia. With this work he sympathized heartily, and promised to do what I wished. He subsequently received a lion's share of the books, etc., I left with the governor of the province. I gave him some for the children's home, and afterwards sent him a considerable number for his soldiers. All these reached Kara safely, and I have since had the great satisfaction of hearing that they were properly distributed throughout the colony. According to my latest news, the colonel is said to have left Kara; and if this be so, I can only hope that he has been replaced by as good a man.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SHILKA.

Departure from Kara.—Parting hospitality.—Ust-Kara police-master.—Head waters of the Shilka.—Collins's descent of Ingoda.—The Onon.—Formation of Shilka.—Scenery below Stretinsk.—Shilkinsk.—Hospitality of police-master.—Non-arrival of steamer.—Efforts at conversation.—Steaming down the river.—Shilka scenery.—Tributaries from north and south.—Arrival at confluence of Shilka and Argun.

MY steamer was due at Ust-Kara on Sunday evening. It was arranged, therefore, that my host should drive me to the river and see me off; or, if the steamer did not come, then leave me to wait its arrival in the house of the police-master. The colonel was pleased to say that he regretted my departure. He seldom received visits of the kind I had paid, which naturally had been more pleasant, he said, than inspection visits of officials. He alluded, however, to a visit to Kara of the Grand Duke Alexei-Alexeivitch as having done much good, and he was desirous of gathering all the information he could respecting our treatment of criminals in England.

The colonel's farewell did not end in words, for, like a true Russian, he made ample provision for his parting guest. Some Tunguses had passed a few days previously, of whom he had bought a box, of native manufacture, both curious and useful, and this he proceeded to fill for me with the good things of Kara.

These included roast chickens and a piece of boiled ham. Preserves, too, my host had discovered that I liked, and I must therefore take some pots of jam recently made. Did I like cheese? Well—at home, half a pound would suffice me for a twelvemonth; but in Siberia, where good butter was scarce, and a cheese cost ten shillings, I had learned to regard it as a delicacy. The colonel therefore insisted on my taking the greater part of a Dutch bowler, and he regretted that he could not offer me the only piece he had of what looked like Cheddar, because he was expecting a visit from his Excellency the Governor of the province, and wanted a delicacy to set before him. The extreme kindness with which this was done was almost embarrassing. In England it would appear strange, but in the district of the Amur these were presents not to be despised, for some of them I could have otherwise obtained neither for love nor money.

At last we set out duly laden, intending to call on our way at the prisons I had not yet seen. Packing, however, had taken rather long; and when we came to the first prison, where the officer was standing ready to receive us, I was afraid we should not have time, and that our staying might involve the missing of the steamer. I therefore begged that we might push on, which we did, to Ust-Kara. Here I looked over various buildings, which have been already referred to, as the summer hospital, with 93 patients, the women's wards, and the wards for the old and superannuated men, also the new cellular prison for politicals, and a prison in which they manufacture various requisites for the use of the convicts. In this last, five men wished to sing to us a piece of Church music, which

they did, and thus ended my visits to five of the six prisons of Kara. Evening was now drawing on, and as the boat had not come, I was consigned to the care of the police-master, and bade adieu to Colonel Kononovitch with feelings of regret.

From Ust-Kara the steamer was to bear me to the Amur. This will be a convenient place, therefore, from which to say something further about the head waters of that river, namely, of the Ingoda and Onon, which form the Shilka; and the Argun, which, with the Shilka, forms the Amur.

The Argun, Onon, and Ingoda all rise in the Kentai (or Khangai) and Yablonoi mountains. From the summit of this latter range the traveller approaching Chita from the west first sees the Ingoda at the foot of the range. From Chita to Stretinsk the journey can be made by water, and Mr. Collins, the first American traveller in this region, in 1858, so accomplished it.* On the fourth day he passed the river Onon, coming in from the south. This stream rises in the same district, but somewhat further south than the Ingoda, and in its upper course its banks are wooded. It is navigable all the summer.

* The Russians at that time were engaged in the annexation of the Amur territory, and the Governor, General Korsakoff, willingly lent him aid. He embarked at Atalan, about eight miles below Chita, in a flat-bottomed barge. Here the river is 200 yards wide, and the shores are well timbered and mountainous. The river proved easy to navigate, and Mr. Collins, his provisions, and 18 persons proceeded down the stream at the rate of nearly five miles an hour. The country on the third day became more open, with extensive high-rolling prairies, and the banks of the stream afforded much beautiful scenery. On the 21st May the forests were still leafless, though flowers were making their appearance, and the willows were budding. The rocks of the river are in many parts covered with mosses and a beautiful fern, and in sheltered spots appears in summer the rhubarb plant.

By the union of the Ingoda with the Onon is formed the Shilka, and at the junction the two rivers have each run a course of some 400 miles. The stream now increases in breadth and slightly in depth, so that, when not frozen, the river can be navigated at all seasons in small boats, though with some risk from the numerous sandbanks and rapids. About 40 miles below the Onon, the Nertcha enters from the north, and here stands the old city of Nertchinsk, not far from which the floating traveller passes the monastery of Nertchinsky, and subsequently arrives at Stretinsk.

It was from this spot I commenced the descent of the Shilka with my Cossack attendant. As we glided along, hour after hour, the shifting scenes reminded one of some grand spectacle in a fairy tale, for bend after bend, and point after point, opened to view landscapes and vistas of surpassing beauty. Now and then we had to beware of rapids, and in one place of a sunken rock called the "Devil's Elbow." The depth sufficed for our boat, but we met a steamer coming up stream, whose captain had a hard task to find and keep the channel.

Between Stretinsk and Shilkinsk the left bank is fairly populated, most of the necessaries of life are easily attainable, and fish and game are abundant. Granite predominates on both banks of the river as far as the third station, Botti, beyond which limestone prevails. The cliffs become lofty, some of them about 1,000 feet, and their summits are riven into numerous picturesque turrets, while beneath are openings leading into caverns. A few miles further the valley of the Shilka opens out, and the rocks recede for a considerable distance till they reach the valley of Tchal-

bu-tchenskoi, down the centre of which flows the river Tchal-bu-tche.

On the space formed by the receding rocks stands Shilkinskoi Zavod, a town stretching two miles along the river on a plateau 30 feet high. This was the seat of an old convict silver-mining establishment, the working of which has ceased long since.* The river here has a breadth of 600 yards, with a current of four knots, and in the spring a depth of seven feet on the shallows, but in the summer and autumn the depth is much less.

On the second day we came in sight of a large house on the left bank, where I landed, thinking perhaps to find some one to speak to. At the various stations I had given tracts, and, in a small way, found a ready sale for New Testaments. I offered the same at this large house, which proved to be that of a doctor, but he was not at home. His wife was in the house, but we had no language in common, and therefore my sale had to be conducted here, as at the post-houses, by dumb motions, one question about the hour being put and answered, I remember, by drawing a clock and marking the hands. Ten miles further was Ust-Kara,

* At Shilkinsk were built several of the barges for the first great expedition on the Amur in 1854, and here the expedition was fitted out with military stores and other necessaries. The Government had, too, in the place a glass factory and a very large tan-yard, but I have a suspicion that these factories were much more important in the days when Messrs. Atkinson, Collins, and Ravenstein wrote, than a quarter of a century later, at the time of my visit. Up to this point at least I could hear of no factories in Siberia, other than those I have mentioned. At Ekaterineburg there was a paper-mill, belonging to Mr. Yates, at whose house I dined; and there were the soap and candle works, near which I stayed, and where, through difficulty of getting a sufficiency of fuel, they were burning wood and rubbish, and with the gas produced therefrom, through a two-feet tube, were heating some of the boilers.

whence I digressed into a description of the head-waters of the Amur.

After bidding adieu to Colonel Kononovitch, on Sunday evening the 27th July, I was waiting in the house of the police-master for the arrival of the steamer. This worthy official was several degrees lower in position and intelligence than my late host, but he had a good house, and spared no pains to make me comfortable. He was living bachelor fashion, his wife and daughters having gone on a tour to Irkutsk. This he regretted, and so did I, for I was given to understand that they spoke French; and it was not particularly lively to be in a house in which you could speak a word to no one, especially with a host who would insist upon talking, whether you understood or not. One hour passed by, and two, and three, and the expected whistle was not heard, till, night having fairly set in, my host made me understand that the steamer had run aground.

It seemed best, therefore, to go to bed, hoping for its appearance in the morning. A bed was made for me on the floor of the best room in the house, but no washing apparatus provided. The maid was to be called in the morning to do the part of a Levite, and pour water on my hands. I was not, however, to retire supperless, and whilst food was being prepared the police-master begged me to try his piano. Accordingly, I strummed three tunes, which represent my stock-in-trade in this department, and my host nodded satisfaction. At supper he rattled away, and it was in vain that I shook my head and replied, "*Ne govoriu po Russki*" (I do not speak Russ). He returned to the charge afresh, until I was glad to retire.

Morning came, but not the steamer, and after breakfast I was writing, when it occurred to me that if the steamer were aground, it might be days or even weeks before it arrived, and at last I thought it desirable to inquire for particulars. A military officer came in, but I could extract from him no language I knew. Presently, however, the police-master brought a piece of paper that gave me hope. It was a polyglot letter to this effect: "Respected Sir, I should be glad to be allowed to teach your children French, which language I know. Your obedient servant, So-and-So." And this was written in Russian, French, German, and English, and, as a finale, was added, "Sic transit gloria mundi." I saw at once there was a genius in the place,—perhaps a released exile, or the wife of one, and I requested my host by signs to bring us together at once. But I think the said genius must have been away, for the police-master was holding a discussion with the officer as if there were some difficulty in the matter, when, as they were talking, the steamer's whistle was heard.

The effect was magical. I rushed to make ready. The carriage was before the door in a very few minutes, and the police-master, who was expecting his family by the boat, was speedily with me, my baggage on the vehicle, and we dashed off to the station. Here I was introduced to the wife and family, and also to a lady who I fancy was the authoress of the polyglot paper,* after which I embarked.

The weather was beautiful, and we steamed down

* "Une sage femme," she called herself, who had been acting in her capacity as midwife, and had returned by the boat. Women alone, I understand, act in this capacity in Russia,—a doctor being called in only in case of difficulty.

the lovely Shilka 150 miles to its junction with the Argun. The first station beyond Ust-Kara was Ust-Chorney. Here the Chorney, or Black river, falls into the Shilka by two channels. This river is so rapid, and sometimes so violent, as to dash the passing boat or raft a wreck against the opposite rock-bound shore. Further on the scenery changes on the south side. Perpendicular cliffs of limestone appear with groups of birch and larch on their tops, and in the small ravines. Over these rounded summits appear, and a long chain of hills stretches southwards towards the Argun.

The next station is Gorbitza, near the mouth of the Gorbitza river. Until 1854 this was the boundary of the Russian and Chinese empires. At Bogdoi, not far distant, is a mineral spring where annually a fair was held, at which a few Russian merchants and Cossacks used to assemble to meet the Manchu who came to barter. The Manchu ascended the Amur from Aigun in large boats, bringing printed cotton goods, silk, tobacco, and Chinese brandy, which they exchanged for glassware, soap, and deer-horns.

Below Gorbitza the river enters a region where the cliffs rise considerably higher than in the limestone. Here granite is heaved up in huge masses, which time, frost, and sun have riven and shattered into curious forms. Ravines are also rent far into the mountains, and down them clear streams descend. A little further on the shores become wooded, pine-trees grow along the banks, and on the upper slopes are black and white birches, with occasional clumps of larch, while the dwarf elm grows from the clefts in the rocks.

Mineral springs are frequently met with on the banks of the Shilka. To some the natives resort. Further down are several islands, upon one of which, named "Sable" island, are pine, larch, and birch. At the river Bankova, having its source in the mining district near the Argun, and falling into the Shilka from the south, there is another place where a fair was held by the Cossacks of the Argun and the Tunguses of the Yablonoi, the latter bringing skins, deer-horns, and a few sable and fox skins. These they bartered with the Cossacks for flour, *vodka*, powder, and lead. Further on, and not far from the confluence of the Shilka and Argun, the Son-ghe-noi enters the Shilka to the south, and at a short distance is a lake from which the natives and Cossacks obtain their supplies of salt. A few miles below Son-ghe-noi are two islands in the Shilka, and a little beyond these the sandstone rocks rise abruptly in picturesque forms from the water. The rocks recede to the southward, and a small delta has formed extending to the mouth of the Argun. Near it is the village of Ust-Strelka,* or Arrow mouth, situated at the junction of the two rivers which form the Amur, and here I arrived on Wednesday evening, the 30th of July.

* Here the Shilka ends its course of 700 miles, and is joined by the Argun, after a course of 1,000 miles. The Argun proper rises among the Nertchinsk ore mountains, at an elevation of from 2,000 to 3,000 feet, and very near to the source of the Onon, the two streams running down the northern and southern slopes respectively of the mountain-range. The upper part of the Argun, however, rises as the Kerulen to the south-east of Kiakhta, in the Kentai (or Khangai) mountains. For 550 miles the Kerulen traverses one of the most inhospitable tracts of the Gobi. It then runs through the Dalai Nor or Lake, and flows into the Argun proper, by which name the lower course of the river is known; and then, after flowing 420 miles further, it joins the Shilka at Ust-Strelka.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE HISTORY OF THE AMUR.

Divisible into three periods.—Period of Cossack plunder.—Poyarkof.—Khabarof.—Stepanof.—Discovery and occupation of Shilka.—Chernigovsky.—Period of conflict with Chinese.—Russo-Chinese treaty of 1686.—Russian mission at Peking.—Affairs on the Amur during Russian exclusion.—Third historic period from 1847.—Preparatory operations on Lower Amur.—Muravieff's descent of the river, 1854.—Influence of the Crimean war.—Colonization of Lower Amur.—Further colonization, 1857.—Chinese protests.—Influence of Anglo-Chinese war.—The Sea Coast erected into a Russian province.—Renewed difficulties with China.—Treaty of 1860.—Review of Russian occupation.

THE history of the Amur, or so much of it as need here be mentioned in connection with the Russians, may be divided into three periods. We have first the period of Cossack pillage and plunder of the native tribes, beginning in 1636, and extending over a period of 50 years to 1682. This was followed in 1683 by a period of warfare with China, lasting for half-a-dozen years, and succeeded by uninterrupted Chinese possession for (roughly) 150 years, to 1848; after which comes the period of Russian annexation, beginning in 1848, completed in 1860, and continuing to the present day.*

I have already stated that, within about 20 years after the founding of Yeneseisk, the Russians pushed on their

* I am specially indebted to Mr. Ravenstein's excellent work, "The Russians on the Amur," for the substance of the following pages.

conquests to the Sea of Okhotsk, on the shores of which, in 1639, they built a winter station for the collection of tribute. It was here first they heard from the Tunguses of tribes to the south, dwelling along the Zeya and Shilka.*

These reports attracted attention in Yakutsk, and an expedition of 132 men, most of them *promyshlenie*, was placed under Poyarkof, who left Yakutsk in 1643, ascended the river Aldan, and built winter quarters for 40 of his men, and stores, in the mountains. Pushing on himself with 92 men, he crossed the Stanovoi range, and, after suffering great hardships, reached the head waters of the Zeya, where he met the first reindeer Tunguses. Further on he came to a Daurian village, in which he was kindly received, but his extortionate conduct provoked the natives to hostility; and one of his officers, having attacked a village and been repulsed, Poyarkof, with the loss of many Cossacks through hunger, retired down the Zeya, descended the Amur to its mouth, and, crossing the Sea of Okhotsk, reached Yakutsk in 1646.

The next prominent traveller was Khabarof, from 1647 to 1652. A shorter route to the river had been heard of by way of the Olekma; and Khabarof, at the head of a band of adventurers, took this route to the Upper Amur. The natives, having heard of the conduct of Poyarkof, fled before the Russians; and Khabarof marched on, slaughtering his opponents, or putting them to flight. Strengthened by reinforcements, he

* This report, so far as the Shilka is concerned, was confirmed in the same year by what a party of Cossacks heard, who had been sent from Yeneseisk to the Vitim, about a prince of the Daurians named Lavkai, who inhabited a stronghold at the mouth of the Urka rivulet, and whose people kept cattle and tilled the soil.

descended the river to the Lower Amur, wintered at Achansk (which no longer exists), and was vainly attacked by the natives and the Manchu. In the following spring he turned back, and ascended the river to the Zeya, where some of his men mutinied. He sent messengers to Yakutsk asking for 6,000 men, and, there being no such force in Siberia, the *voivod* dispatched the messengers to Moscow, where the conquest of the Amur had been for some time under consideration. Khabarof returned in 1652, and thus ended the first nine years of Russian adventure on the Amur, during which some of the leaders had shown great perseverance; but the natives had been badly treated, exposed to all sorts of extortion, and their tilled lands reduced to deserts.

We come now to Stepanof (1652—1661). Reports of the excesses committed by the adventurers already mentioned had reached Moscow, and it was determined to send a force of 3,000 men to occupy the newly-explored territories. The command was given to Stepanof, and he was accompanied by hundreds of adventurers, who were attracted by the reported riches of the country. Stepanof was not able to carry out his instructions to found settlements, and spent his time in roving along the Amur and up the Sungari. At Kamarskoi he was besieged, in the spring of 1655 by a large Manchu force; but with a garrison of 500 men he put 10,000 foes to flight. Subsequently he was joined by Feodor Puschkin and 50 Cossacks, by whom he sent the tribute he had extorted to Moscow. Puschkin's party lost their way, and 41 of them perished. Stepanof continued his predatory expeditions till 1658, when, at the mouth of the Zeya, 180 of his men deserted,

and he was met by a Manchu force, and himself and nearly all his band slain or made prisoners. This for a time practically cleared the Amur of the Russians, and what few remained evacuated the district in 1661.

All the expeditions above mentioned reached the Amur from the north-west, striking the river some miles below the confluence of the Shilka, at what is now Ust-Strelka. We proceed to say a few words respecting the discovery and occupation of that tributary, 1652-58. Cossacks from Yeneseisk had pushed their explorations beyond the Baikal, and, in consequence of their reports, Pashkof the Voivod, in 1652, sent out a party to cross the lake, under command of Beketof, who, two years later, built a fort on the Nertcha; but the expedition came to nothing. Other adventurers went out in 1654 and 1655. At length Pashkof was entrusted with a force of 566 men to found a town on the Shilka, whence the surrounding territories might be subjugated. He left Yeneseisk in 1656, and on his way founded Nertchinsk. Whilst so doing, he sent a number of his men down the Amur to look for Stepanof, but they were met by his deserters, and robbed of their provisions, after which, in 1662, Pashkof returned to Yeneseisk, his mission unattained.

What Government troops had failed to effect, however, was soon after accomplished by a runaway exile —Nikitao Chernigovsky—who, at the head of a lawless band, murdered the Voivod of Ilimsk, and in 1665 fled to the banks of the Amur, where he built a fort on the site of Albaza's village, opposite the river Albazikha. He was joined by others as lawless as himself; villages were founded near the fort, and Albazin became a place of importance. A petition was forwarded to

Moscow, representing what had been done as done for the Tsar, and praying for Chernigovsky's pardon, in consideration of his recent services. It was granted; and Chernigovsky made tributary many of the surrounding tribes near Albazin. The Chinese complained of Russian encroachments, and conciliatory embassies proceeded to Peking, in 1670 and 1675. The people of Albazin, however, determined to do as they pleased, and, in spite of orders to the contrary, they navigated the Lower Amur, and founded settlements, so that at the close of 1682 the Russians had established themselves at Albazin, on the Zeya, and on the Amgun.

This finishes the first period in the history of the Amur—that of Cossack pillage and plunder.

The oppression of the Russians naturally caused the tribes on the Amur to apply for help to their neighbours and nominal masters, the Chinese, who made large preparations to expel the intruders. They destroyed the Russian settlements on the Zeya and Amgun, took some of the garrisons prisoners, and advanced upon Albazin in June 1685. After a blockade of 18 days the garrison surrendered, and were allowed to retire to Nertchinsk. The Chinese then destroyed the fort, and withdrew down the river to Aigun; but the Russians followed in the wake of their conquerors and rebuilt their town. The Chinese, therefore, returned in July of the following year, again surrounded the fort, where the Russians held out bravely till November, in which month the siege was raised, in consequence of orders from the Chinese Government, to whom the Russians had sent ambassadors desiring conditions of peace.

The ever-recurring complications with the Chinese made the Russian Government desirous to come to some arrangement regarding the frontier of the two empires. Venyukoff accordingly was sent on a mission to Peking to arrange preliminaries, and he brought back with him a letter in Chinese, Manchu, and Mongol, translated into Latin, which supplies a good idea of Chinese views on the Amur question.*

If this letter be anything like a true statement of the case, which there seems to be no just cause to doubt, then the moderation and forbearance of the

* It was dated 20th November, 1686, and ran in part thus: "The officers to whom I have entrusted the supervision of the sable hunt, have frequently complained of the injury which the people of Siberia do to our hunters on the Amur. My subjects have never provoked yours, nor done them any injury; yet the people at Albazin, armed with cannon, guns, and other firearms, have frequently attacked my people, who had no firearms, and were peaceably hunting.

"They also roved about the Lower Amur, and troubled and injured the small town of Genquen and other places. As soon as I heard of this I ordered my officers to take up arms, and act as occasion might require. They accordingly made prisoners some of the Russians who were roving about the Lower Amur; no one was put to death, but all were provided with food.

"When our people arrived before Albazin, and called upon it to surrender, Alexei and others, without deigning a reply, treated us in a hostile manner, and fired off muskets and cannon. We therefore took possession of Albazin by force; but even then we did not put any one to death. We liberated our prisoners, but more than 40 Russians, of their own free choice, preferred remaining amongst my people. The others were exhorted earnestly to return to their own side of the frontier, where they might hunt at pleasure. My officers, however, had scarcely left, when 460 Russians returned, rebuilt Albazin, killed our hunters, and laid waste their fields; thus compelling my officers to have recourse to arms again.

"Albazin consequently was beleagured a second time; but orders were nevertheless given to spare the prisoners and restore them to their own country. Since then, Venyukoff and others have arrived at Peking to announce the approach of an ambassador, and to propose a friendly conference to settle the boundary question, and induce the Chinese to raise the siege of Albazin. On this a courier was sent at once to Albazin to put a stop to further hostilities."

Chinese stands out in striking contrast to the conduct of the Russians. I have described (Chapter XXXV.) how the conference was conducted, and how it ended in a treaty, by which Albazin and the whole of the Amur were confirmed to the Chinese.*

This settlement practically closed the district to Europeans for about 160 years—that is, till 1848. A few encroaching hunters were from time to time caught and punished. Some convicts also escaped from the mines of Nertchinsk to Chinese territory, and others went down the whole length of the Amur, one of them getting away from Nikolaefsk to America; but very little is known of the Amur basin during these years, though Russia kept up the supply of priests who crossed the desert to sustain the Russian mission at Peking.

After the treaty of Nertchinsk, the town of Aigun was removed to the right or southern bank of the river, and in keeping with the jealous policy of exclusion peculiar to the celestials, the Chinese were forbidden to emigrate northward to the thinly-populated Manchuria, and the Manchu were forbidden to pass northward of the town of San-sin on the Sungari, whilst the privilege of trading on the Amur was restricted to ten merchants, who obtained for that purpose a licence at Peking. Besides these particulars of the Amur during

* The treaty began as follows :—"In order to suppress the insolence of certain scoundrels, who cross the frontier to hunt, plunder, and kill, and who give rise to much trouble and disturbance, to determine clearly and distinctly the boundaries between the empires of China and Russia, and lastly to re-establish peace and good understanding for the future, the following articles are by mutual consent agreed upon." After defining the boundaries, the treaty went on to provide that hunters of either empire should under no pretence cross the frontier. Also that neither party should receive fugitives or deserters; and the third article states, "Everything which has occurred hitherto is to be buried in eternal oblivion

the period of the Russian exclusion, we learn something from the letters of Roman Catholic missionaries in Manchuria, one of whom, M. De La Brunière, descended the Amur to the country of the Gilyaks, where he was killed. But I shall speak of this when I come to the people and place of his murder. This finishes our second period—that of war with China. It remains to treat of the recent history of the Amur, and of the annexation of all its left and part of its right bank by Russia. This will bring before us the events occurring between 1847 and 1861.

The recent history of the Amur may be said to date from the time that Count Nicolas Muravieff became Governor of Eastern Siberia in 1847. The Russians had long seen the desirability of acquiring the right of navigating the Amur, if only for the purpose of sending down it provisions for their settlements in Kamchatka, the land carriage of which annually required 14,000 to 15,000 pack-horses. With a view to this, they had sent Golovkin to Peking at the beginning of the present century to treat for the free navigation of the river, or, at all events, to gain permission to send a few ships once a year with provisions. But the Chinese were unwilling to make any concession whatever.

Muravieff became Governor of Eastern Siberia in 1848, and one of his first acts was to send an officer with four Cossacks down the Amur, who were never heard of again. Admiral Nevilskoi, in the same year, left Cronstadt for the Pacific to explore the mouth of the Amur; and, in 1851, founded Nikolaefsk and Mariinsk as trading ports. Two years later were founded Alexandrovsk, in Castries Bay; and other posts in the island of Sakhalin at Aniva Bay and Dui.

The next year, 1854-5, was important in the history of the Amur, as that in which the first Russian military expedition descended the river from the Trans-Baikal provinces. Russia had at the time three frigates in or near the Sea of Okhotsk, and, owing to the breaking out of the Crimean War and the presence of an English fleet in the Pacific, it was feared that these might be left in want of supplies, and that the Russian settlements on the Pacific, which at that time depended on shipments from home, might be seriously straitened. The Black Sea and the Baltic were blockaded, and the only feasible plan was to send provisions from Siberia down the Amur. The nearest Chinese authorities at Kiakhta and Urga professed themselves unable to give permission; but as no time was to be lost, Muravieff's necessity knew no law, and he started down the river.

He had a steamer, 50 barges, and numerous rafts, 1,000 men, and guns. Several men of science, to whom we owe much of the solid information given us by Mr. Ravenstein, accompanied him. His journey down the river to Mariinsk was uneventful, and he returned by way of Ayan to Irkutsk.

The continuation of hostilities between Russia and the English and French allies naturally made the Russians prepare for an attack on their eastern settlements,* and considerable activity was displayed by

* Their strength on the Amur at the time was very inconsiderable, and the allies, having mustered their forces on the American coast, came down upon a comparatively feeble folk in Siberia. Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka was attacked, but the Russians managed to hold their own till orders arrived from Petersburg to abandon the place, which they did on 17th April, 1855, taking with them the inhabitants, with whom they safely reached Castries Bay.

them on the Amur in 1855-6. Three more expeditions left Shilkinsk in the course of the year, and conveyed down the river 3,000 soldiers and 500 colonists, with cattle, horses, provisions, agricultural implements, and military stores.* Accordingly, the places founded on the river grew fast. Villages were built by the colonists at Irkutskoi, Bogorodskoi, and Mikhailovsk. Great progress also was visible at Nikolaefsk, which from a village of 10 houses grew to one of 150.

The operations of the allied fleets in the Pacific in 1855 were on a larger scale than in the preceding year; but the results were equally insignificant, and the peace of 1856 left the Russians free to carry on their plans of annexation. General Muravieff now went to Petersburg to advocate the granting of large means for colonizing the river, and during his absence the direction of affairs was left in the hands of General Korsakof.†

But the year 1857-8 will ever be one of the most memorable in the history of the river. Muravieff had succeeded at Petersburg in securing large grants of

* The Chinese were either unwilling or unable to oppose the passage. Up to this time no attempt had been made to found any settlement on the Upper or Middle Amur, and the presence of the allied fleets in the Pacific ostensibly justified the assembling of a force on the Lower Amur. The Chinese did send to Nikolaefsk certain mandarins to treat; but these not being of sufficient rank, Muravieff refused to receive them.

† In the course of the 12 months 697 barges and rafts descended the river, conveying 1,500 head of cattle, and the provisions required by the forces on the Lower Amur. Cossack stations were built on the Upper and Middle Amur, and another settlement made on the lower part of the river. Postal communication by horses was established between Nikolaefsk and Mariinsk, which until then had been carried on by dog sledges. The Russian colonists agreed to supply the necessary horses during winter at the rate of £22 a "pair," and during the summer they were to supply the steamers on the river with the requisite fuel.

men and money. Troops descended and formed numerous stations along the left bank, and colonists and provisions were conveyed to the possessions of the Russo-American Company. A Captain Furruhelm conducted down the river 100 emigrants and 1,000 tons of provisions, and with him travelled Mr. Collins, already referred to, as "commercial agent of the United States for the Amur river." Count Putiatin, also bound on a mission to Japan and China, availed himself of the newly-opened way. Putiatin received orders to induce the Chinese to come to some definite arrangement regarding the frontier of the Amur, but he was not successful. This result was felt on the river; for the mandarins now again protested against the occupation of the territory, and in some instances molested the Russian traders. Accordingly, Muraviefi hastened to Petersburg for fresh reinforcements, and more troops were sent east; whilst the territory in dispute, together with Kamchatka and the coast of the Okhotsk Sea, was erected into a separate province, called "the Maritime province of Eastern Siberia." A squadron of seven screw steamers was dispatched from Cronstadt in the summer, and two European-built steamers, the *Lena* and the *Amur*, ascended the river with merchandise and troops.

When Muravieff got back to the Amur, in 1858, the Chinese were in a very different humour, for they were then at war with the English and French, and Russia found no difficulty in concluding an amicable treaty at Aigun on 28th of May. China ceded to Russia the left bank of the Amur down to the Ussuri, and both banks below that river, and opened the Sungari and Ussuri to Russian merchants and travellers.

On the 21st May, Muravieff laid the foundation of Blagovestchensk, at the mouth of the Zeya; he then descended the Amur, and founded Khabarofka, at the mouth of the Ussuri, and subsequently selected the site of Sophiisk; after which, in August, he was created "Count of the Amur." On the last day of the year this territory received a new organization, and was divided into the "Maritime province of Eastern Siberia," and the "Amur province," the latter denoting a district along the river, above the mouth of the Ussuri.*

We now come to 1859-60, during which time several measures were taken to favour colonization. Political exiles were to have passports granted them for three years, to enable them to proceed to the east; and if deserving, their term was to be extended permanently. The sailors stationed at the Lower Amur were allowed to retire after 15 years' service, received a plot of ground, and might send for their families to come to them at the Government expense. The colonists, too, were *to* be maintained by Government for two years, after which time they were to provide for themselves. Government also renounced its monopoly of the mineral treasures

* Admiral Kazakevich remained military governor of the Maritime province, and resided at Nikolaefsk; and General Busse was appointed military governor of the Amur, with a salary of £1000 a year, and a residence at Blagovestchensk. Shortly after the ukase of the 31st December, the Cossack forces on the Amur received a separate organization. Up to the end of 1858, 20,000 persons of both sexes had been settled along the river, and these were to furnish two regiments of cavalry and two battalions of infantry, as well as two battalions of Ussuri infantry from the Maritime province. Commercial enterprise was promised a fresh impulse by the foundation of the Amur Company, the object of which was the development of trade on the river. It started with a capital of £150,000, and was privileged to open establishments on the Amur and Shilka, but proved unsuccessful, and after a few years was dissolved.

of Siberia; and in future any one, except convicts, was to be allowed to search for precious stones or metals. This attracted many emigrants, and on the arrival from Western Siberia of 10,000 of them at Irkutsk, Cossack stations were founded along the banks of the Ussuri and the Sungacha, with a view to the settlement of the frontier.

Difficulties, however, with China again arose. The Chinese had repelled the advance of the allied French and English forces in 1859, and, being elated for the moment with the power of their arms, imagined that it was no longer necessary to conciliate the Russians, and told them that China had never ceded the Amur, that they had no right there, and must immediately quit. Things, therefore, looked gloomy towards the south;* but the relative positions of China and Russia were suddenly transposed by the successes of the English and French, who thoroughly humbled China; and Russia, availing herself of the opportunity, was able to conclude, on the 14th of November, 1860, a most advantageous treaty, much more comprehensive than any ever concluded by China with a foreign power, which gave Russia a right to the country north of the Amur and east of the Ussuri, together with the entire coast of Manchuria, down to the frontiers of Corea.

I have thus traced the history of the Amur from the

* The newly-acquired territory, moreover, was not fulfilling the anticipations of those who thought to find at once the country turned into the granary of Siberia, and supplying with its produce and manufactures the navies of the world. The Amur was a source of continual expenditure, and the Cossacks were not proving the best of colonists. To remedy this, German colonists had been sent for. My old host, with whom I stayed at Vladivostock, Captain De Vries, was to bring 40 German families from California, who were to be settled at the mouth of the Bureya; but, as he told me, he found the thing impracticable.

time that the Russians first heard of the river, in 1639, down to 1860, when they obtained possession of it.* It remains for me now to give the reader, as best I can, an idea of the condition of things as I found them at the time of my visit.

* At that date they had brought to the region about 40,000 colonists, most of them from the Trans-Baikal and Irkutsk governments, who walked with their cattle to the Shilka, and then proceeded on huge rafts, like floating farm-yards. The cattle were turned on shore to feed at night, and marched back in the morning to travel by day. By these means the banks of the river became populated, though scantily, this region covering an area of 361,000 square miles, or twice as large as that of Spain. The Russians, by 1861, had established military posts along the whole course of the Amur, on the Ussuri, and at various harbours on the sea-coast, the whole military force, up to 1859, being about 15,000 men. Simultaneously while strengthening her forces on the Amur, Russia reinforced her navy in the Pacific; and in 1860 she had there 19 steamers, mounting 380 guns, and manned by between 4,000 and 5,000 sailors and marines. There were also, in 1861, 12 steamers on the river, nine of which belonged to the Government.

CHAPTER XL.

THE UPPER AMUR.

Formation of the Amur.—Chinese boundary.—Our steamer.—Captain and passengers.—Natives of Upper Amur.—Oronchons.—Manyargs.—Their hunting year.—Our journey.—Run aground.—Table provisions.—Scenery.—Albazin.—Cliff of Tsagayan.

WE glided into the Amur about sunset on the 30th July, when, happening to come on deck, I found the passengers gazing over the stern of the vessel. Before us were the two rivers of which the Amur is formed. To the right was the defile of the Shilka, to the left the Argun; and between the streams the mountains narrowed, and came to a point a mile above the meeting of the waters. On the tongue of land below was the Russian village and Cossack post of Ust-Strelka. The soft light of evening threw a charm over the well-wooded landscape. We had, moreover, reached at last a point out of range of the ubiquitous English traveller, and to which even comparatively few Russians make their way from Europe. The Shilka we had travelled, and it was given to us to peep a little way up the Argun, and remember that in its valley the great Ghenghis Khan fought some of his early battles, and from hence started to subdue China, and begin that wonderful career of Mongol conquest that extended to Central Europe.

Looking to the north-east and down stream, the

view was exceedingly pretty. On the right, heavily wooded mountains abut upon the river for two miles, while on the left is a strip of bottom-land backed by gentle slopes. To the front we see the river sparkling in the sun, and rejoicing in its new and beautiful birth.

We were now fairly launched upon a river which, including its numerous tributaries, is said to drain a territory of 766,000 square miles—an area as large, that is, as any three countries of Europe except Russia. The length of the stream from this point to the sea is 1,780 miles, with a fall of 2,000 feet; but if the Argun be regarded as the main stream, then the total length of the Amur is 3,066 miles, with a fall of 6,000 feet. It will be best, I think, to treat of so huge a river in sections, seeing it passes through such varieties of climate and population. The first section, extending from Ust-Strelka to Blagovestchensk, at the mouth of the Zeya, we will call the Upper Amur; from Blagovestchensk to Khabarofka, at the mouth of the Ussuri, the Middle Amur; and from Khabarofka to the Pacific at Nikolaefsk, the Lower Amur. The Russians have made a fine atlas, in 46 sheets, of the river below the confluence of the Shilka and Argun.

Up to the point we had now reached, Russian territory lay on both sides. Henceforth to Khabarofka we were to have Chinese soil on the right. The boundary then descends along the bank of the Ussuri, and continues in a tolerably straight line southwards, through Lake Khanka to the Bay of Peter the Great, in the Sea of Japan. My intention was, therefore, roughly speaking, to keep along this boundary, and embark for Yokohama.

But I have said nothing as yet of the steamer in

which the first part of my journey was to be accomplished, namely, from Kara to Khabarofka, a distance of 1,270 miles. It was a paddle-boat called the *Zeya*. As I walked on board at Ust-Kara, Captain Paskevitch met me, told me in French that my cabin was not quite ready, and asked me to occupy meanwhile his room on deck. He had heard of my mission from Colonel Merkasin, at Stretinsk, and had most kindly set apart for me, on a full steamer, a first-class cabin intended for two persons. This he reserved so tenaciously as to refuse a first-class place to a passenger rather than cause inconvenience by giving me a companion, though I was asked to pay only a single fare.

As compared with the steamer on which I traversed the Obi, the *Zeya* was small, and it was not new. There were first and second-class cabins fore and aft, but third-class passengers lived on deck. All three grades were well represented. Among the first-class passengers was M. Kokcharoff, a Government officer connected with the gold-mines, whom we had met at Nertchinsk at dinner, and who was the father of one of the young officers we saw at Irkutsk. There were also an officer and his wife whom we had seen on the road at Verchne Udinsk. Among the second-class passengers were several naval and military officers, proceeding to their stations on the Pacific, and with them the lady and gentleman of whom we got the start with the horses from the Baikal. Several of the ladies spoke French, and a naval captain, Baron de Fitingoff, spoke a little English also. Thus I needed not to be silent, and soon found myself at home.

It speedily became manifest that our captain was a man of determination, and that he had a rough-and-

ready way of enforcing his orders. The cook, an oily-looking man, had smuggled *vodka* on board, and made himself so far drunk as to spoil the passengers' dinner; whereupon the captain seized him and tied him to the capstan. He had not been there long, however, before the capstan was required for some one else. The ship had got into difficulties, the number of the crew being insufficient for the occasion; and the captain ordered a man-of-war's-man, travelling as a third-class passenger, to lend a hand. He did not choose to do so, whereupon the captain collared him, and, having released the cook, bound him to the capstan. Our chief, I found, was only a young man—less than 25—and had served for a time in the Imperial navy. He had fallen in love, and wished to marry before the age allowed in the service. Just then the Amur Company made him a good offer to take charge of one of their vessels, and he had thus left the Government service and accepted a stipend which enabled him to forsake a bachelor's life. He thought, however, that in giving up the navy he had made a mistake, and sent his papers by some of our passengers to be presented to the Governor at Vladivostock, asking to return.

As we proceeded we found the population on the Chinese bank was exceedingly small, and but few houses appeared on the Russian side. The natives of the Upper and Middle Amur belong, all of them, to the Tungusian stock, though they differ somewhat among themselves, according to the manner of life they pursue, and their nearness or otherwise to Chinese influence. Thus, on the Upper Amur, on the Russian territory, are the Oronchons, or reindeer Tunguses; whilst further east, north of the Middle Amur, are their

brethren the Manyargs, or horse Tunguses. On the southern bank of the Upper Amur are the Daurians, who to some extent cultivate the soil; whilst further east, and to the south of the Middle Amur, is the region of the Manchu, the most civilized of all the Tunguse tribes. This division is somewhat arbitrary, and does not notice subdivisions of some of the tribes; but it may suffice for the present to indicate their territories, and we can enter into further particulars as we approach their respective localities.

The Oronchons numbered, in 1856, 206 individuals of both sexes, roving over an area of 28,000 square miles—a country, that is, as large as Bavaria or the island of Sardinia. They originally lived in the province of Yakutsk, whence they emigrated to the banks of the Amur in 1825, and occupied a part of the territory of the Manyargs, whom they compelled to withdraw farther down the river.*

The Manyargs occupy the north bank of the Middle Amur below the Oronchons, but in summer they ascend the river for the purpose of fishing. As the needs of the reindeer drive the Oronchons to the moss tracts of the mountains, so the needs of the horses send the

* There are two tribes of them, one called Ninagai, which, in 1856, mustered 68 males and 66 females; 27 of the males paid annually 5*s.* 5*d.* of tribute each, or instead thereof 12 squirrel skins, to the Russian officer commanding the post at Gorbitza. The other tribe, the Shologon, numbered 72, including 40 females, of whom 17 had to pay to the commandant of Ust-Strelka a tribute of 6*s.* 4*d.* each. They owned 82 reindeer. There is also a tribe along the sea coast, called Oronchons, or Orochi, amongst whom it is customary for women to suckle their children till they are three or four years old. The men are recognized by their wide-brimmed hats. I saw one of them in prison at Nikolaefsk, and was struck with his manly bearing. This agrees with what Mr. Ravenstein says of the Oronchons of the Upper Amur, that they are not so submissive as the Manyargs, whose spirits have been broken by the oppression of the Mandarins.

Manyargs to the grassy valleys of the Zeya, and to the prairie region eastwards to the Bureya mountains.

Apart, however, from their differences as to habitation, and the domestic animals they use (the Oronchons keeping deer and the Manyargs horses), we may speak of the Oronchons and Manyargs together. In appearance they are rather small, and of a spare build. Their arms and legs are thin, the face flat, but the nose, in many instances, is large and pointed. The cheeks are broad, the mouth large, the eyes small and sleepy-looking. The hair is black and smooth, the beard short, and the eyebrows very thin. Old men allow the beard and moustache to grow, but carefully pull out the whiskers. They cut the hair short on the forehead and temples, and plait it behind into a tail, ornamented with ribbons and leather straps. This fashion was no doubt copied from the Manchu, but since they have come under Russian influence it has gradually waned. In the case of the women the hair is parted down the middle, the plaits are worn round the head, and fastened with ribbons above the forehead. During summer the women wear a conical hat made of cotton, somewhat like an extinguisher. Unmarried girls are recognized by their head-band, embroidered with beads.

The Oronchons and Manyargs lead a wandering life. In spring and summer they live on the banks of the river to fish; in autumn they retire to the interior to hunt. In these migrations the deer or the horses carry the scanty property of their owners. The horses are small but strong, of great endurance, and find food in winter by scraping away the snow with their feet.

Wild animals in the region of the Upper and Middle

REINDEER TUNGUSES WITH BIRCH-BARK TENT.

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Amur are numerous. The Oronchons disperse in small parties to hunt them, returning from time to time to their yourts.* They hunt squirrels, sables, reindeer, elks, foxes, and sometimes bears. Squirrels they find in great numbers. A good sportsman may kill 1,000 in a season, and 500 is an average bag.† In December they take their furs to the localities fixed upon for paying the *yassak*, or tax, where also they barter with merchants assembled for that purpose. Each male between the ages of 15 and 50 pays annually two silver roubles, or their equivalent in furs. No other

* These yourts, or tents, are easily built and quickly removed. About 20 poles are stuck into the ground, to form a circle from 10 to 14 feet in diameter, and are tied about 10 feet above the centre. The frame is covered with birch bark, and overlaid with skins of reindeer and moose. An opening is left in front to serve as a door, and a hole in the top for the chimney. During winter the door is closed by furs or skins. In case of temporary removal, the skins and bark are taken away, and the poles are left standing.

† Mr. Ravenstein gives, from Russian sources, an interesting account of the manner in which these natives spend their hunting year. In March they go on snow-shoes over snow, into which, at that season, cloven-footed animals sink, and shoot elks, roe, and musk deer, wild deer and goats; the tent being fixed in valleys and defiles, where the snow lies deepest. In April the ice on the rivers begins to move, and the huntsman, now turned fisher, hastens to the small rivulets to net his fish. Those not required for immediate use are dried against the next month, which is one of the least plentiful in the year. In May they shoot deer and other game, which they have decoyed to certain spots by burning down the high grass in the valleys, so that the young sprouts may attract the deer and goats. June supplies the hunter with antlers of the roe. These they sell at a high price to the Chinese for medicinal purposes. The Chinese merchants come north in this month, bringing tea, tobacco, salt, powder, lead, grain, butter, and so forth, so that a successful huntsman is then able to provide himself with necessaries for half the year. In July the natives spend a large part of the month catching fish, taken with nets or speared with harpoons. They are able also to spear the elk, which likes a water-plant growing in the lakes. He comes down at night, wades into the water, and, whilst engaged in tearing at the plant with his teeth, is killed by the huntsman. In August they catch birds, speared at night in the retired creeks and bays of the river and lakes.

taxes are levied upon them, and this brings in to the Government an enormous quantity of skins.

My journey on the Upper Amur, or, more accurately, from Ust-Kara to Blagovestchensk, occupied eight days. The distance was 700 miles, and the first-class fare three guineas. Under ordinary circumstances, however, the time ought not to have been so long, but there was less water in the river, the captain said, than he had ever known before. It was by reason of this that the boat had run aground at Shilkinsk on the Sunday I was to have started, and on Monday evening a sister-boat, the *Ingoda*, having done the same, and knocked three holes in her hull, the *Zeya* had stayed alongside to render assistance. This caused the loss to us of the whole of Tuesday. Both boats belonged to the same company, and it was an act of policy, as well as kindness, that the damaged boat should not be left in so lonely a region, whilst a further reason for submitting to the delay, and keeping the boats together, was that our own vessel might run aground and so need assistance from the *Ingoda*.

I was curious to hear from the captain what was the

Their flesh, except that of the swan, is eaten, and the down is exchanged for ear and finger rings, bracelets, beads, and the like. Thus they spend the summer months, afterwards retiring again to the mountains for game. In the beginning of September they prepare for winter pursuits. The leaves are falling, and it is the season when the roebuck and the doe are courting. The natives avail themselves of this, and, by cleverly imitating the call of the doe on a wooden horn, entice the buck near enough to shoot him. Generally speaking, this is the plentiful season of the year, so far as flesh is concerned; but, should the hunters not be fortunate, they live upon service-berries and bilberries, which they mix with reindeer milk. They also eat the nuts of the Manchu cedar and of the dwarf-like Cembra pine. The latter part of September and beginning of October are again employed in fishing, for the fish then ascend the river to spawn. About the middle of October begins the hunting of fur-bearing animals, the most profitable of all game; and this goes on till the end of the year.

thickness of iron on the *Zeya*, and what distance we should have to sink, supposing we went to the bottom. The iron, I learned, was three-sixteenths of an inch thick, which was somewhat alarming, but it was a comfort to know that the water in some parts of the river was not much more than 30 inches deep. Our steamer drew only two feet and a half, consequently we were often gliding along within a few inches of the ground. One of the crew was placed in the bow of the boat, holding a measuring rod, with the feet marked in black and white, and secured to a string. This in shallow places he constantly threw, as if harpooning fish, and then noticing the depth when it struck the bottom, he called out in a sing-song fashion, "*Chetiri-s'polovenoi! chetiri! tri-s'polovenoi! tri!*"—four-and-a-half! four! three-and-a-half! three! and so on; the speed of the vessel being slackened when the small numbers were called.

After reaching the Amur on Wednesday, we travelled safely for that evening and on Thursday, but on Friday morning, coming to a turn in the channel, the boat ran aground on a bank, with her whole length turned sideways to the current—going at the rate of about four miles an hour. The shallowness of the stream now became apparent, for when the men jumped overboard the water rose hardly up to their waists.* Every effort was made to float the craft with anchors

* For steamers to run aground in the Volga is so common a thing that the captains take a number of third-class passengers free, on the understanding that, if the ship gets on a bank, they shall jump overboard and endeavour to get her off. Bold captains there, moreover, have a plan, when coming to a shallow place, of putting on steam, in the hope that the impetus and extra commotion made in the water by the paddles may tide them over the difficulty. The banks of the Volga being of mud, such experiments are not very dangerous, but our boat had grounded upon stones.

and levers, and digging away the beach, until, as evening came on and brought no success, we hoped the *Ingoda* would overtake us and return the compliment of rendering assistance, especially as we had once put back to look after her welfare. The *Ingoda* did come, but was not powerful enough to get us off, and we had therefore to lie aground till Saturday morning. The greater part of the passengers were then shifted from the *Zeya* to the *Ingoda*, and there they were compelled to remain from breakfast-time till evening, and that, too, with very little food, for the *Ingoda* was not carrying passengers, and so was not provisioned. Whilst this shifting was going on, I was in my cabin writing, and so had not to change. Meanwhile the sailors had hard work, for they were in the water nearly all day. About two o'clock, however, the *Zeya* was once more afloat, after which it took three or four hours to get up the anchors, and then, for the rest of our journey, we had no lack of water. The boat did not usually travel at night.

These delays had put a considerable strain on the resources of our cook, whose arrangements were not of a high order. I had rather anticipated this; and, having become so accustomed to see Russians travelling with their own provisions, had prepared accordingly. Some loaves of white bread had been brought for me by the ship from Stretinsk, and fresh butter; besides which, Colonel Kononovitch, as already stated, had loaded me with good things, and I had not parted with my provision basket and its cooking apparatus.*

They had different arrangements on the Amur from

* After having taken with me my cuisine several times, I am disposed briefly to advise any who may care to be counselled, by saying "don't."

hose we had on the Obi. The steward undertook to rovide every one with four meals a day. The first vas tea and bread on getting up. Next, about 11 a.m., ame "*déjeuner à la fourchette*," consisting of two ourses. At five o'clock came bread and tea again, nd dinner, of three or four courses, followed at seven. The provisions were decidedly inferior to those of the Obi, but acquaintance with certain Russian dishes was hereby forced upon me, which I might otherwise not ave known. One of them was "*gretchnevaya kasha*," r buckwheat gruel, with melted butter like oil poured ver it. I imagined it might be given us as a last esource, all other provisions having failed; but the passengers seemed to think it good though humble fare, and said it was what they provide largely for the soldiers. It is a daily dish, I am told, among peasants and servants in Russia. Further on we bought and slaughtered an ox. And as we approached Blagovestchensk, our table improved to clear soup, with minced patties, meat from the joint, and stewed fruit.

The service, too, was inferior to that on the Obi, for on the Amur the steward was represented by a couple of boys, not too tidily dressed, and with rough heads, who knew more of play than of waiting. It should be added, however, that the price charged for the four meals a day was not exorbitant, namely, three shillings; and after having the samovar frequently into my own cabin, and other extras, though to a consider-

It certainly does not pay in Russia, for hot water may almost everywhere be had, and the people well understand the speedy preparation of the samovar. A lunch basket, however, is a great comfort, and I should not think of taking a long journey without one. The cuisine may occasionally be needed; but in going round the globe I used it only once, and when travelling last year over the Caucasus to Armenia not at all.

able extent providing myself, my steward's bill for the eight days came only to 17 shillings.

We were highly favoured in the weather, which, with the exception of one day, was fine, and added much to the enjoyment of the journey. Between Stretinsk and Blagovestchensk were 42 stations. Many of them were named after the Russian officers who took part in the annexation of the country, such as Orloff, Beketoff, Korsakoff, etc.

At Ust-Strelka the river is 1,100 yards wide, and sometimes 10 feet deep. At Albazin, 160 miles lower, it contracts to 500 yards, but increases to 20 feet in depth. After leaving the Shilka, the scenery of the Amur at first deteriorated. Soon, however, the river stretched across the valley, and the banks rose in precipitous cliffs, or steep rocky slopes. Many brooks entered the stream on both banks. When rain falls on the mountains, the river rises sometimes 12 feet and more in the course of a few days, the greatest rise being 24 feet. Our captain of the *Zeya* was hoping that the Thursday's rain would thus aid him in getting out of the shallows. Five streams join the Amur on the Russian side, between Ust-Strelka and Albazin, of which the Amazar is the first and most considerable. At their mouths are small alluvial plains overgrown with grass, sometimes 18 inches high, though on higher spots in this district the herbage is not luxuriant.

Below the Amazar the banks were alternately rocky bluffs and wooded bottoms, the river sweeping along in great picturesque bends. At Sverbeef the river increases in breadth. The mountains are not so high, and sandbanks are frequent. These appear at low water as islands. The forests are thin, and there is

little underwood. On the mountains larch and firs prevail. In the valleys the white birch predominates, with bird-cherry and aspen. The trees, however, are small; and among them, further on, are apple-trees with tiny fruit, willows, and the hoar-leaved alder.*

On the rocky mountain slopes are the service-tree, alder, aspen, poplar, and hawthorn, together with the Daurian rhododendron. On loose soil Indian wormwood frequently covers a whole mountain slope.

As we approached Albazin the mountains retired, and below them were extensive prairies, affording excellent pasturage. Opposite the town, on the Chinese bank, the Albazikha, or Emuri, falls into the Amur behind a large island, with an area of several thousand acres. Oaks and black birch now begin to take the place of the larch, and at the foot of the mountains are seen elms, ashes, hazels, willows, the Daurian buckthorn, wild roses, and bird-cherries—the last sometimes reaching to a height of 50 feet.

Albazin is the most important of the towns we passed between Ust-Strelka and Blagovestchensk. It is finely situated on a plateau 50 feet high, and extends some distance backwards to the mountains. We arrived there early on Friday morning, August 1st. Albazin was important to the early adventurers, by reason of the fine sables taken in its vicinity. †

* The white birch is the most important. In spring the natives peel off the bark in strips from two to four yards in length. The coarse outside of the bark, and the ligneous layers on the inside, are scraped off. It is then rolled up, and softened by steam, which makes it pliable. Several of these are sewn together, and supply the native with a waterproof blanket or mat, forming a wind screen in winter, and a covering for the hut in summer. The bark thus prepared is used also for wrapping merchandise, making small canoes, baskets, platters, cups, and household utensils.

† Albazin, as already stated, is noted in Siberian annals for the sieges

The Albazin sable is said to be the best on the Amur, that of the Bureya Mountains next, and, thirdly, that of Blagovestchensk; but none of them are so good as those obtained further north.

I was much struck, below the town, with the brilliant red of the sandstone cliffs. On the right bank the mountains approach again close to the river; but on the left the plain continues for 70 miles, ending in a rock or promontory, called *Malaya Nadejda*, or Little Hope. This lofty mass of rock projects into the river in the shape of a semicircular tower. After passing the station Tolbuzin, 240 miles from Ust-Strelka, the river takes a more southerly direction, and lower down has numerous islands. These are covered with poplar, ash, and willow; and among the flowers are seen the rhododendron, the lily of the valley, pink, primrose, violet, white poppy, forget-me-not, and white pæony; also garlic, chickweed, asparagus, cinquefoil, and thyme.

A few miles lower is a remarkably steep sandstone cliff, of yellowish grey colour, bounding one of the reaches of the river for a distance of three miles. It is called Tsagayan, and is 302 miles from Ust-Strelka. It is about 250 feet high, and has in it two seams of coal, of which there is said to be plenty on the Amur, though

it stood, and one of the Russian stories connected therewith is, that when the garrison was greatly distressed for food, Chernigoffsky sent a pie, weighing 40 or 50 lbs., to the Chinese commander, to convince him that the fort was well provisioned. This present was so well appreciated, that the Chinaman sent for more, but in vain. History does not say whether the pie was of beef, mutton, pork, or puppies! The remains of walls, moats, ditches, and mounds, showing the site and extent of the town, may still be traced; and, by digging, the curious may still find there bricks, shreds of pottery, arms, etc. In Maack's celebrated work on the Amur, his plan represents Albazin as a square of 240 feet, and the Chinese camp as a parallelogram of 670 feet long and 140 wide. The Amur measures here 580 yards wide.

it has not been worked, I believe, owing to the abundance of wood. The natives look upon Tsagayan as the abode of evil spirits. At its foot are found agates, carnelians, and chalcedonies.

Beyond the Tsagayan the valleys descending to the river are wider, the steep mountains recede, and the meadows are richer in grass. Small groves of poplars, elms, ashes, and wild apples alternate with bushes of red-berried elder, sand willows, self-heal, and wild briar. At the station Kazakevitch, however, the mountains approach the river, and a dark granite rock, 300 feet high, overhangs the water. Eight miles south is the rock Korsakof, a promontory of semi-circular shape; and 40 miles more bring the traveller to the mouth of the Komar, which is the second considerable stream flowing into the Amur from the right bank after leaving Albazin, the other being the Panza. The course of the Amur here becomes very tortuous, and, about 50 miles below, the Komar almost describes a circle, leaving but a neck of land half a mile in width. The Komar is the greatest affluent of the Upper Amur from the Chinese side. It is a little short of 600 miles in length, more than one-half of which is navigable. The upper part of the valley is populated by Daurians.

Travelling thus amidst beautiful scenery, we reached Blagovestchensk on the eighth day, being now 560 miles from Ust-Strelka, and the width of the river having considerably increased. Here, however, we may leave the water for awhile, for the steamer stayed a whole day, and thus gave me the opportunity of spending some hours ashore.

CHAPTER XLI.

BLAGOVESTCHENSK.

Russian orthodox missions.—Particulars of Orthodox Missionary Society.—Visit to telegraph station.—Seminary for training priests.—Salaries of Russian clergy.—Blagovestchensk prison.—Leafy barracks.—View of the town.—Molokan inhabitants.

"BLAGOVESTCHENSK,"—I hope that the tongue of the reader curls round the syllables of this word more easily than did mine on the first occasion I attempted to pronounce it. The *g* should be guttural, and the first *e* like the French *é*. The meaning of the name is "Annunciation," or, as some put it, "glad tidings." I know not whether this has anything to do with the fact that Blagovestchensk is the head-quarters of Oriental Siberian missionary effort, about which it will here be a rest to say a few words by way of change from the waters of the river.

As Russia ranges under her standards many nations, so she is brought into contact with many religions; with Lutheranism in the Baltic provinces and Finland, Buddhism in Mongolia, Mohammedanism along her southern frontier, Paganism in the Caucasus and Armenia, and, we may add, Shamanism and other *'isms* among the aboriginal inhabitants of both her European and Asiatic territories. The Russians have long made persistent efforts to win back their own dissenters, whether from the various bodies of Raskolniks, or the Uniats, which

latter were seduced from them by the Church of Rome.* Besides this reclaiming work of her own people, foreign missionaries were, in the time of Alexander I., allowed to work among the heathen within the empire, and I have already noticed the London mission to the Buriats. The Synod, however, put a stop to this foreign work; and that their jealousy in this matter continues, I learnt from a Lutheran pastor, who, when he was taking up his residence near some of the native tribes, was bidden "not to busy himself as a missionary."

Compared with the Western Churches, whether Roman or Reformed, the Eastern Church has never been remarkable for missionary zeal, and I was therefore not a little surprised and pleased in Siberia to stumble unexpectedly upon the latest report (for 1876) of the "Orthodox Missionary Society," published at Moscow the year before my visit. The book is of respectable size, extends to 100 pages, and the statistics are displayed with considerable fulness. At present it is with the Russians only the day of small things; but it should be borne in mind that 1876 was only the seventh year of the Society's existence.

Some particulars of this young Society will be interesting, the more so as I am able to supplement what I learned in Siberia by extracts from the report for 1879, quoted in the *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, September 7th, 1881. The Society has a central council, and branches in 29 dioceses, with 7,560 members, which means, I suppose, subscribers. Its capital in 1879

* The number of dissenters is duly tabulated in the official reports sent to the Emperor. Thus, in one of them I was permitted to see was written, "No case has occurred during the year of dissenters being reclaimed, but we have in the province, as last year, 140 of both sexes of Bezpopoftschins, and 105 Molokans."

amounted to 660,000 roubles, of which 121,000 were spent during the year.* Among the remittances sent to the central council from associations is £77 from "the army and navy." Again, there appears what I imagine to be a special fund for "propagating the orthodox faith among the heathen." This is apart from their efforts among Mohammedans and Romanists; but the Russian Church has missions to the adherents of all religions within her empire, except Protestants.

As for the spending of the money, it appears that the council and 27 associations distributed, among 19 missions, funds to the amount of £11,580. The 21 mission stations are, with one exception, within the bounds of the empire. The other mission, to which I have alluded in a previous chapter, is in Japan. I heard at Kasan that they have a missionary also in Jerusalem, New York, and San Francisco; but these, I presume, are chaplains. Their chief European pagan missions are in the governments of Astrakhan, Riazan, Perm, and Kasan, in which last are several semi-heathen tribes.†

* The amount collected in boxes at church doors in 1876 was 30,100 roubles 37½ kopecks, and from other sources 111,598 roubles 28¾ kopecks, making a total of 141,698 roubles 65¾ kopecks—say £17,712 (reckoning the rouble *in this chapter* at half-a-crown, its approximate value at the date of the report), besides £1,537 paid to the council by local committees. A comparison is drawn between 1876 and the previous six years, and shows an advance over 1875 of 890 members and £500. The Society has six associations in Siberia, of which Irkutsk has the largest number of members—490, and raises the largest amount of money—£3,470. There is also a list of "special donations" in 1876, which were invested; one donation of 40 roubles, or £5; two of 50 roubles; one of 60; six of 100; one of 200; and one, the largest, of 300 roubles, or £37.

† The results obtained by the Society in 1879 in the region of the Volga, inhabited chiefly by Mohammedans, are much less than in Asia, the opposition being so great that for the present the missionaries can only prepare the way. To this end, schools might become a powerful auxiliary. Some tribes, such as the Tcheremisses and the Votyaks, for example, show an inclination for instruction; but the want of funds prevents the extension

It is in Asiatic Russia, however, that most of the Society's money is expended, and the conversion of 5,000 Pagans is reported to have taken place in 1879. They have opened a school among the Samoyedes. They have also missions in Kamchatka (including probably, the Sea-coast province), upon which, in 1876, they expended £300, and from whence the following year, according to the Almanack, they obtained 606 converts. The provinces, however, in which most money is spent are those of Tomsk, Irkutsk, and the Trans-Baikal. In the latter two are the Buriats, amongst whom the Russians have 30 mission stations and 68 missionaries.* The province of Tomsk includes the region of the western chain of the Altai mountains, where schools and missions have been established for the Kirghese of the Steppes. In the Altai mission, during the first half of the year 1877, they enrolled 195 converts. Further east they have missionaries, some of whom I met, among the Goldi and Gilyaks; but I shall speak of them when we come to their districts.

of the Russian school system to the Mohammedan villages. The same is seen with the Kalmuks of Astrakhan, who would welcome schools, and gladly abandon their nomad and heathen congeners to settle upon lands assigned to them. At Noire-Cherinsk, 12 families began the construction of houses, but for lack of money failed to complete them, and asked the Government for an advance of £3 for each family. At Oulane-Ergansk, certain families have come to settle, and already are giving themselves to agriculture.

* One of their triumphs in 1879 was the conversion of the learned lama, Taptchine-Nagbou-Mangolaiew, who was first impressed by the Russian Church services he attended from the preceding year at Chita and Verchne Udinsk, where, after the manner of the missionaries, the service and singing is, I believe, in the vernacular. This man was baptized in the waters of the Baikal, from which he takes his present name of Vladimir Baikalsky. He understands seven languages—Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian, Thibetan, Sanscrit, Latin, and Russ, and has accepted the post of Professor of Mongolian in one of the missionary colleges.

At Blagovestchensk lives the Bishop of the diocese, who had been described to me as "a good missionary."

We stopped at Blagovestchensk on Tuesday, August 5th, and I made my way to the telegraph station, where, as in other towns, thanks to good introductions, I received much kindness from the officials. When travelling to Barnaul, I chanced to light on a telegraph officer, Mr. Friis, whose name was on my list, and he told me of a brother officer in Tomsk who spoke English. At Irkutsk Mr. Larsen gave considerable linguistic help; so did Mr. Koch at Stretinsk; and now, at Blagovestchensk, I found a Mr. Niellsen, who had worked in London, and spoke English; and Mr. Peko, who spoke French and English too. Mr. Peko, I found, was the director of this station of first rank.* When dining with the manager, Mr. Peko, and Mr. Niellsen, in the garden, I was interested to hear, among other scraps of professional information, that English is the best of languages for telegraphy, for that in it they can express more in few words than in any other. The Russians, they said, prefer to use English rather than their own language for telegrams. My nationality was further flattered in the town by a

* The Government authorized, so far back as 1861, the construction of a telegraphic line from Nikolaefsk, up the Amur, to Khabarofka, which was to continue thence to the southernmost point of the Russian territories on the Sea of Japan. The telegraph line from Kasan to Omsk was to be opened in the same year; from Omsk to Irkutsk in 1862, and thence undertaken in 1863 to Kiakhta and Khabarofka, the Amur Company agreeing to do the work and the Minister of Marine to provide the funds, the Government guaranteeing 5 per cent. on the outlay. The rates for telegrams in Russia and Siberia are:—

Within a radius of 66 miles,				1	shilling	for	20 words.
"	"	660	"	2	shillings	"	"
"	"	1,000	"	4	"	"	"
Beyond	"	"	"	6	"	"	"

loctor's wife telling me that to speak English was ıow in Siberia and Russia more fashionable than to ;peak French. Said she, "*On peut oublier maintenant 'e Français pour apprendre l'Anglais.*"

Blagovèstchensk has a seminary for the training of ɔriests, similar to those established in Russia by Peter :he Great. He found his clergy exceedingly ignorant, ınd established these institutions for their sons, enjoin- ing the bishops to support them with a twentieth part ɔf the income from the monasteries. In these esta- blishments, and others which have been added, are :ducated the rank and file of the Russian clergy.*

I did not once meet in Russia with a priest who :ould speak French, German, or English. Perhaps they throw their strength into patristic and ecclesiastical learning, since the parochial clergy are usually said to be not well instructed in secular studies. An instance was given me by an Englishman, who travelled in Siberia with a Russian archbishop, who one day asked the Englishman which had the greater population, London or San Francisco. Whereupon my wicked friend said, "Well, you see, London has a population of two hundred thousand, and San Francisco four

* Upon my return journey on the Amur, I met on the boat some of the students going back to Blagovestchensk after their holidays, and from them and their teacher I got the following information respecting their place of education. Priests' sons are provided with education, food, and clothing free; other scholars pay for food and clothing. They are at the seminary ten months and a half during the year, and have the remaining six weeks for holidays. They have six classes, and stay two years in each, with four lectures daily, and read from eight till two. At the seminary at Blagovestchensk, in 1878, there were 50 students and nine professors, namely, of Latin, mathematics, Greek (no Hebrew), theology, philosophy, the Bible, Russ, Manchu, physics, music, etc. The students, I was told, on leaving, usually know a little Latin and Greek, and may learn modern languages; but this last, in Russia, is not compulsory.

millions." "Ah!" said the archbishop with satisfaction. "I thought so; I thought San Francisco was the larger!"

Those students who wish to attain to the higher degrees of learning, on leaving the seminary, proceed to one of the ecclesiastical academies which correspond to our universities, and where they can take the degrees of student, candidate, master, and doctor of theology. There is no theological faculty in the Russian universities, but it is now required that all who are to be consecrated bishops shall have passed through the academy.

To return, however, to the seminary: the students enter at the age of eight, and remain normally till twenty-two, when they receive a diploma, which is accepted by the bishop, and the candidate without further examination is ordained.

The case of one of these students presented a curious instance of the working of the inconsistent requirement of the Russian Church, that the parochial clergy at the time of their ordination *must* be married. "Do you see that boy running about on the deck?" said a fellow-passenger to me, pointing to one of the seminary students. "He is nineteen years old, and is returning to the seminary for the last time. In the course of a few months his mother is to find him a wife, and next year he will return to be married, and then immediately ordained!" * This would be before

* I have called this requirement of the Russian Church inconsistent because they interpret St. Paul's words, that a deacon should be the husband of one wife, so literally as not to ordain a bachelor as parish clergyman; and yet, though St. Paul gives the same injunction concerning a bishop, they will not consecrate a priest to the episcopate so long as he is married.

he canonical age for ordination, but was owing to the ack of clergy in the Primorsk, in which there are bout 50 congregations with churches or chapels. Between Nikolaefsk and Vladivostock, a distance of ,300 miles, are only 14 priests and 2 deacons; and so ressing was the need of clergy a few years since that radesmen, letter carriers, and even yemstchiks in some ew instances were ordained.

Mr. Peko accompanied me at Blagovestchensk to all upon Mr. Petroff, the deputy-governor, from whom I learned that there was only one prison in the province, having 26 rooms. We visited it, but the only notes I have are "dirty and overcrowded," and "punishment cells all full," some having two men in a place not too large for one. What made the prison so full I know not, nor am I able to say whether they were local offenders from the province or exiles temporarily there on their way eastwards. There were none lounging about in the yard, so I suppose they had all been gathered for our inspection. The punishment cells being occupied was not, as far as I know, because the men had misbehaved, but because they were compelled to use all available space. Moreover, since the prison authorities seem to look upon solitary confinement as so great a punishment, it may be that two were put in some of the cells for the sake of company. I remember that when I spoke to the president of the Tomsk prison approving the separate as opposed to the gang system, he thought it was decidedly bad to put a *moujik*, or simple peasant, in a cell alone; for "having nothing to think about," he said, "he might go mad!" This good man informed me, too, in connection with my self-imposed mission,

that the prisoners did not want so much religion, but liked also books of history, travels, etc. This I knew, but since three wagonloads did not more than suffice for the little I attempted, and my means were limited both as to carriage and in other ways, I was only too thankful to take so many books as we did, and leave it to other philanthropists to complete the work. I left 50 New Testaments and 12 wall pictures at Blagovestchensk with Mr. Petroff for the prison, for the 20 rooms of his two hospitals and a school in the course of erection, with four rooms for prisoners' children.

Near the hospital were summer Cossack barracks, put together in the most primitive fashion. The ordinary barracks needing repair, they had cut branches of trees and leafy underwood, tied them in fagots, and stood them up so as to form walls and roof, which gave tolerable shelter for hot weather, but served as poor protection from wind and rain. They were intended, however, to last only for a few weeks.

From these summer barracks there was a fine view of the river and town. The houses are situated on a plain 15 feet or 20 feet above the water. The Government establishments and merchants' stores are large and well built, each having plenty of space around it. Some of them have gardens, and stretching along the bank from the wharf to the roomy telegraph office is a green sward planted with trees for a park. Blagovestchensk has a population of only 3,400, but its long river front and its cross streets give it the appearance of an important town. Some of the shops were excellent, and well supplied with merchandise. The town was founded in 1858, and the Amur Company

A STAROVERS OR OLD BELIEVERS' COUNTRY CHURCH. *Page 527.*

kept there one of its principal stores. On the winding up of its affairs, this store was bought by the company's clerk. Mr. Knox says, in 1866, that the Russian officers complained of the combinations among the merchants to maintain prices at an exorbitant scale. I heard, too, that this is still done. If, for instance, in the middle of the winter a merchant discovers that his brother tradesmen have sold all their sugar or any other article, and that his stock is all the town possesses, then, knowing that no more can arrive till the ice goes and the navigation opens, he can demand higher prices for goods of which he has a monopoly. Candles were quoted to me as costing usually 11*d.* or 1*s.* per lb.; but as rising sometimes to 2*s.* 6*d.* Cheese costs from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb., but I suppose that these articles must be of European or American manufacture. Chickens at Blagovestchensk vary from 6*d.* to 2*s.* each, veal from 4*d.* to 5*d.*, and beef from 2½*d.* to 4*d.* per lb. Milk costs 2*d.* per pint in summer, and 4*d.* in winter; live geese, bought from the Manchu, cost from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.*; but in winter, from the Molokans, 5*s.* In connection with these prices should be quoted the cost of land, which may be purchased from the Government for 2*s.* an acre.

I was told that the town is full of dissenters. I did not hear of any Starovers or Old Believers, nor observe on any church the *three* transverse beams of their form of the cross; but there were many Molokans,—colonists, I suppose, or descendants of exiles. Their presence, doubtless, accounts for a good deal of the prosperity of the town, for they are "honest, sober, and industrious."

The *Molokans* are so called because they drink milk on the usual fasting days. Their origin is involved in obscurity, and by some is dated back to the middle of the last century. Early in the present century many were living in the south of Russia. An English gentleman, residing at Berdiansk in 1848, visited their villages, and from his wife I learn that Salamatin, the Molokan chief, and his family were pious, but very simple, uneducated people. My friend used sometimes to invite them to her table. She tells me that their enlightenment came, to all appearance, simply from reading the Bible. They found there the worship of images forbidden, and accordingly declined to bow down before them, on which account some were persecuted, even to bodily pain, but to no purpose; they would not give way. Blunt's "Dictionary of Sects" says that a Baron Haxthausen, in 1843, visited a colony of 3,000 Molokans in the Crimea, and found that they denied the necessity of baptism and the Lord's Supper. With Blunt's statement partly agrees what my friend told me, namely, that some important official came to visit the Molokans in her neighbourhood (not, however, in the Crimea, but in the government of Ekaterinoslav, which was then their habitation, their villages being situated on the banks of the Moloshna), and found so little objectionable among them, and so much that was good, that the official gave them an excellent character, and they were afterwards left unmolested. Also their alleged disuse of baptism and the Lord's Supper seems to agree with what I heard of them from a fellow-traveller, who lodged in the house of a Molokan; for he told me that on Sundays they hold meetings, read the Scriptures, pray, sing, expound the

Bible, and ask questions, but he thought they did not baptize nor receive the Lord's Supper. But I remember my lady friend telling me that when the Molokans separated from, or were turned out of, the Russian Church, they had no priests nor any person of education to guide them, nor have they priests now, but only elders; hence, if they are without sacraments, I am not clear whether it is from choice or necessity.* My fellow-passenger spoke in high terms of the Molokans of Blagovestchensk. He said he never saw any of them intoxicated, or even enter a tavern; that he rarely or never saw them out of temper, or heard them use bad language; and that they spent their spare time in reading the Scriptures.

But this does not save them from annoyance. Their manner of living at Blagovestchensk has enabled many of the Molokans to become rich, so that they can hire servants. An old Russian law, however, forbids a Molokan to employ an orthodox Russian. The Russians, notwithstanding, like to serve the Molokans, because they are good masters, and pay well. Hence the law has become practically obsolete; but the summer before my visit, the police-master (a man of anything but exemplary moral character), having a grudge against a principal Molokan, and, Haman-like, thinking scorn to lay hands on one only, began doing his best to annoy the whole of them in the town. How the matter ended I did not hear.

I saw, before I left Siberia, an official confirmation

* The Molokans of Ekaterinoslav were not indifferent to the sacraments, for Salamatin, their then chief, was wont to baptize by immersion; and as for the Lord's Supper, they celebrated it sitting round a table, each communicant receiving a piece of bread broken from one loaf, and the cup was afterwards passed round to each member.

of the good opinion I was led to form of the Molokans. The governor of a province wrote officially to Petersburg thus: "We have 105 Molokans, most of them living in the South Ussuri district. They are living quietly, and are very laborious, and amenable to authority. They are civil in their bearing towards the members of the orthodox Church, and are not fanatical." Looking, therefore, at this triple testimony, and comparing the lives of the Molokans with the lives of the orthodox, I felt that to bring the orthodox into contact with the Molokans would be likely to improve the orthodox rather than otherwise, and that the Tsar would have more good subjects than he now has if he had more Molokans.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MIDDLE AMUR.

Departure from Blagovestchensk.—The Zeya.—Climate.—Employment of time.—Russian tea-drinking.—The Bureya river and mountains.—Delightful scenery.—Ekaterino-Nicolsk.—Distribution of books and Scriptures.—Recognized by a passenger.—Prairie scenery.—Shooting a dog.—The Sungari.—Chinese exclusiveness.—Course of the river.—The Amur province.—An excise officer.—Remarks on alcohol.—Teetotalism in Russia.

WE left Blagovestchensk on the morning of the 6th of August, and soon found the river widened. A short distance below the town is the mouth of the Zeya, the largest affluent of the Amur we had yet seen.*

It was along the Zeya that the first Russians reached the Amur in 1643. Since the Russian occupation, 5,000 peasants have been settled along the river, which is said to be navigable for steam three or four hundred miles from its mouth. It is, I believe, owing to the immense volume of water at times discharged by this river that Blagovestchensk is liable to serious inunda-

* This river rises in the Yablonoi range, and pursues a course of 700 miles to the south-east, receiving several affluents from the east before it flows into the main stream. At its mouth it is nearly a mile wide, and in some places 35 feet deep. Its swift, turbid, yellowish waters are no mean addition to the black waters of the Sak-hah-lin, as the natives call the Amur. For some distance below the junction the two colors are distinctly visible; but finally the black dragon swallows up his yellow neighbour, and flows on majestically towards the ocean.

tions. At the time of my visit the town stood from 20 to 30 feet above the river, but in the course of a few weeks, news reached the Lower Amur that Blagovestchensk was so deeply flooded that the water had risen to the telegraph wires, and that there were several feet of water in the houses of the town. I heard, subsequently, of a flood higher by five feet that took place in 1872.

Beyond Blagovestchensk we experienced a decided rise in the thermometer. This town is on about the same parallel as London, and has a summer temperature not very different; but its winter climate is much more severe.* So far as my own experience is concerned, I was highly favoured in the weather, for the only day on which any rain worth noticing fell was the last of July, on the Shilka. At the commencement of the voyage, at night, I put my maximum and minimum

* The greatest heat, in July 1877, at Blagovestchensk was 89°·2, and at Greenwich 88°·2; but the greatest cold, in December, at Blagovestchensk was 32° below zero, as compared with 28°·7, the greatest cold at Greenwich. Speaking generally of the weather at Blagovestchensk, Mr. Ravenstein remarks that in the winter of 1859-60 it was fine until the middle of October. On the 4th November snow fell, and soon after the river was frozen. During December and January it was fine though cold, the temperature falling occasionally to 45° below zero, and at one time to 49°, and never rising more than 9°·5 above it. Violent storms occurred during November, and again in February. On the 2nd of April was the first thaw. Between the 6th and 9th of May the river became free of ice, and the last snow fell on the 12th, but without remaining on the ground. The greatest heat during the summer was 99°. The district of the Middle Amur enjoys a more favourable climate than the Upper Amur, though only so far as the summer months are concerned. These are free from hoar-frost, which, on the upper part of the river, is often destructive to the harvest. The winter is quite as long, and the Amur at Blagovestchensk is frozen over from the beginning of November to the commencement of May; and the Zeya some three weeks longer. The quantity of snow, however, is not too great to allow of the Manyargs keeping their horses throughout the winter pasturing in the open air.

thermometers out of the cabin window; but, having broken the latter on the 2nd of August, I am unable to say more than that the nights became very much warmer. On August 6th I noted that the heat was very great, and was doubly thankful in the morning for a cold bath. My cabin was about the size of an old-fashioned oblong church pew, with seats on the longer sides. These were too narrow to sleep upon, so I inflated my air bed and placed it on the floor; then in the morning it was necessary merely to remove the bed and unfold my bath previous to calling for water. I nowhere found in Russia or Siberia the use of "the tub" as English people now use it; and when on one occasion in Moscow I asked the landlord whether in the morning I could have a *cold* bath, he said he had never been asked for such a thing in his life!

Time on board hung by no means heavily upon my hands; for, having received several papers of statistics and official information written in Russ, I was glad to get them translated by some of the ladies who spoke French. I thus had opportunities of receiving explanations upon points not quite clear, and of correcting wrong impressions. With this writing-up books I alternated letter-writing, both private and official, though it seemed to be not much use writing to England, since I expected to get there by crossing the Pacific in less time than a letter could do so by crossing Siberia. The captain, however, expected to meet a steamer that would take mails to Stretinsk, and I therefore wrote a number of "open letters," as the Russians call them, if only that my friends might receive a penny post-card from the land of my

temporary exile. Among them, I remember, was one to Miss Frances Ridley Havergal, to whom I had written the previous year during my Archangel tour. I little thought at the time I was writing she had passed away, and that when crossing America I should read of her death.*

Thus, what with translating and writing, reading some small manuals I had brought on botany and geology, and gathering information on Russian affairs, the days passed happily enough. My fellow-voyagers were pleasant, and, after being thrown together for nearly a fortnight, we became quite sociable. The afternoon samovar was a great rallying-point, for Russians dearly love their tea—and not a little of it either. When two Moscow merchants have concluded a satisfactory bargain, they retire to a *traktir*, or tea-shop, where they call for a samovar, drink so many potations and make themselves so hot, that they call for a towel to wipe off the perspiration, and then—"begin again." Our cook replenished his pantry at Blagovestchensk, and so did I, for I bought up all the white bread I could find, and Mr. Peko kindly gave his parting guest both butter and cheese. On the first day we travelled 340 miles, to Ekaterino-Nicolsk. When we started, the river was 1,200 yards

* I wrote also to General Kaznakoff, the Governor-General of Western Siberia, at Omsk, requesting that the Scriptures, which I had arranged for the interpreter to take to Tiumen to be forwarded thence, might be distributed through the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatinsk; so that, with what I hoped to do in the Sea-coast province, I began to look upon my plans for the supply of the Siberian prisons as all but completed. The boxes containing these books did not reach Tiumen till the autumn; they were some time on the road to Omsk; but when I last heard of them, they had reached their destination, and were about to be distributed.

in width, with soundings of 15 feet. At Aigun, 14 miles lower, it had increased to 1,866 yards wide, and to 30 feet deep. The scenery during the early part of the day displayed an extensive plain, with no visible limit on the left hand, and bounded on the right by low

RUSSIAN PEASANT, WITH SAMOVAR.

ranges of hills. The soil of this prairie is clayey, with an upper stratum of rich black mould, which is covered with luxuriant grasses, attaining often the height of a man. Among them may be seen Manchurian panic grass, and succulent, broad-bladed kinds of which I do not know the names; also grape and pea vines, and

many varieties of flowers, among which the lily of the valley is so abundant as to fill the air with its fragrance. Small shrubs of cinnamon-rose are hidden everywhere by the grass, and, with vetches and other climbing plants, render travelling over these prairies, as Mr. Collins testifies, extremely difficult.

Below Aigun, the country on the north continues flat, and is covered with a rich black soil, in places fourteen inches thick. About 30 miles below Aigun, the river divides into many channels, and the right bank in several places is scooped out and steep. On the left are extensive shallows and sandbanks—some barren, others covered with grasses and willows. Of this last there are nine species on the river. The natives use the bark for making ropes. At Skobeltsina, 160 miles below Blagovestchensk, the Bureya comes in from the north, after a course of 703 miles. This river flows through a level prairie country, diversified by clumps of oaks and maples. At its mouth it has a breadth of half a mile. Beyond this stream the south bank rises, and toward the latter part of the day we found ourselves not far from the Bureya mountains, where the hills approached close to the river. Coal seams from three to four inches thick, resembling cannel coal, have been discovered in this district. The lower portions of the hills were wooded with small oaks, and on more elevated parts were denser forests of young oak and black birch. In shady ravines are found groves of white birch and aspen, and in open situations, and on the islands, various kinds of willows, limes, bird-cherry trees, small Tatar apples, elms, the Manchu ash, the Mongol oak, and a few cork trees of small size. Hazels also grow here, and at the skirt of

the forest may be found the vine climbing the trees to the height of 15 feet. The most characteristic shrub of these forests is the Manchurian virgin's bower, the numerous white blossoms of which contribute not a little to its beauty.

We were favoured with a delightful evening for our journey through the Bureya mountains, the scenery of which reminded me forcibly of some parts of the Danube.*

The Bureya, or Little Khingan, mountains cross the valley of the Amur at nearly right angles. They are of mica schist, clay slate, and granite. Porphyry has been found in one locality, and there are said to exist indications of gold. As we journeyed down the stream in the evening light, the tortuous course of the river added much to the beauty of the scene. Almost every minute the picture changed, hill, forest, and cliff giving variety to the prospect as we wound our way through the defile. Here and there were tiny cascades breaking over the steep rocks to the edge of the river, and occasionally a little meadow nestled in a ravine. At times one seemed completely enclosed in a lake, from which there was no escape visible save by climbing the hills, and it was impossible to discover any trace of an opening half a mile ahead. And thus we travelled on, till at dusk we arrived for the night at Ekaterino-Nicolsk, a settlement of 300 houses, standing on a plateau 40 feet above the river. Here I found a

* At the entrance of the defile, 783 miles below Ust-Strelka, and on the north bank, is situated the station Pashkof. On the opposite bank rises the bold promontory of Sverbeef, projecting far into the river. From a breadth of two miles the Amur suddenly decreases to 700 yards, the depth in many places reaching to 70 feet, and thus it flows for 100 miles to Ekaterino-Nicolsk. The current sweeps along at the rate of three miles, and in some places attains as much as 5½ miles an hour.

church, which was approached through an avenue of trees in a public garden. I afterwards learned that specimens of all the trees in the region were planted there; but when I entered it, the light was too far gone to allow of my seeing more than that we had come to beauties of vegetation superior to anything I had yet beheld in Siberia.

The arrival of a steamer at Ekaterino-Nicolsk is not an event that takes place daily throughout the year, and the whistle draws a large proportion of the population to the river's bank—some to sell garden produce, some to meet friends, and some to look on. These little crowds afforded me excellent opportunities for distributing my tracts, and selling or giving away the Scriptures. A large proportion of the Russian colonists get their living by supplying fuel for the steamers. In 1866 the Government used wood to the value of £6,000, and private firms £1,200; and as we had frequently to stop at these wood stations, I was able to go on shore, and leave my printed messengers in the most out-of-the-way places, where they were always thankfully received, and often gladly purchased.*

This attracted the attention of the passengers, who wished also to purchase. One day, on the Shilka, I sold more than 30 copies, some of them to very poor-

* Another opportunity had occurred on the Upper Amur, on our meeting a steamer tugging an immense two-decked barge laden with seamen, who had finished their term of service in the Pacific, and were returning homewards with their wives and children. Their barge had the appearance of a huge Mississippi steamer loaded with passengers above and below, and as we approached they hailed us. Our captain was not then out of shallow water, and as he knew the commander of the approaching steamer he deemed it advisable to drop alongside and ask about the condition of the river, exchange a few kindly words, and perhaps drink with his brother navigator a glass of tea, or something stronger. I, too, went on board,

looking persons. A merchant on board wished to invest largely, but I was unwilling to sell wholesale, preferring rather to scatter my stock over as wide an area as possible. I found, moreover, that travelling merchants in Siberia ask a shilling for the books I was selling at sixpence; and though, considering the difficulties of carriage from Petersburg, this was not perhaps exorbitant, yet I wished rather to bring my wares directly within reach of as many purchasers as possible, and even to *give* them, if necessary, in lonely and far-off places. We reached some out-of-the-way spots on the Obi by sending parcels of books to the priests, with a letter, but this I was unable to do on the Upper and Middle Amur.

The curiosity of my fellow-passengers was of course aroused by what appeared to them my strange proceedings, and they hit upon various conjectures as to who and what I might be. It has not unfrequently been my experience to find, after curiosity has subsided, that my distributing religious literature has secured for me many attentions and acts of kindness from those who, before reading the tracts, were disposed to be prejudiced and perhaps opposed. I found this particularly the case in Siberia, though I was hardly prepared to learn that the intelligence of what

and sold 20 New Testaments in as many minutes, distributing also several papers and books. I wished to make the captain a present of some New Testaments for the use of the crews of his two boats, but he preferred to buy them, and gave me 3½ roubles for 14 copies, to which I added some placards, etc. The captains, too, of the *Zeya* and the *Ingoda* bought some for their crews in preference to my giving them. I had, however, already nailed up some of my pictures in both cabins of the two boats, and placed in each a copy of the New Testament for the use of the passengers, as was done also for the boats by which we travelled on the Obi and the Kama.

I had done three years before in Finland had reached the Amur. On the second day, however, between Blagovestchensk and Khabarofka, a passenger, who had come on board the previous day, espied my name on my luggage, and, coming on deck, he asked if I had travelled round the Gulf of Bothnia. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he said he had read of my tour, which had been translated by my Finnish friend for a paper called the *Helsingfors Dagblad*. He thus remembered what I had done, and was abundantly willing to be of service if he could. His name was M. Emil Kruskopf, an inspector in the telegraph service, and he performed several kindnesses for me unasked. He had been flattered as a Finn by the way I had spoken of the Scandinavian steamers, and thus I found that a kind word was bearing its fruit after many days, and far from the place where it was spoken.

Among the crowd who came to look on at Nicolsk was the priest, to whom I gave some pamphlets and some copies of the *Russian Workman*. Next morning we departed, hoping by nightfall to reach Khabarofka. After proceeding a short distance the mountains receded on the left, and, a little lower, on the right also. Then appeared two islands, the one on the right being about half a mile long and a few yards high, covered with birches and elms, in the shade of which grasses grow to the height of six feet. The second island is a steep rock. The depth of the river continued to be 70 feet.*

* From this part to the mouth of the Sungari the prairie extends as far as the eye can reach, and the banks of the river are in many places swampy. The stream increases in breadth, and has numerous islands

The country in this part is the most desolate along the whole course of the Amur; though, with us, the monotony of the afternoon was enlivened by a cry that a bear was swimming across the river. And, surely enough, there was the head of *some* animal above the water, not very far from the steamer, though I confess it did not appear to me to be that of a bear. Some of the passengers went below for their revolvers and rifles, and began to fire, much to the excitement of every one on board. The captain stopped the ship, and as the animal came nearer, the shot entered the water so close to his nose that he raised himself to see what was the matter. At last a bullet struck him in the head, and the discolored water proclaimed a fatal shot. A boat was lowered, and some of the crew put off, but only to find that all the excitement had been bestowed upon an unfortunate dog!

We passed the mouth of the Sungari, on the southern bank of the Amur, 992 miles below Ust-Strelka.* The Sungari, with its affluents, drains the larger portion of Manchuria. Very little is known about it, though its valley is said to be tolerably well peopled and fertile.†

covered with willows and other trees. The islands do not interfere with the navigation, as they are ranged along the two banks of the river, and leave an open channel between.

* The color of the Sungari is lighter than the Amur, and Mr. Collins, who tasted the water, pronounces it insipid and warm, as coming from a southern source. The force of the current is about two knots, that of the Amur here being four knots. The Sungari is a mile and one-third in breadth at the mouth. It rises on the eastern slopes of the great Khingan, or Shan-alin, or White Mountains, and, being joined by many tributaries, runs in a southerly direction, till, meeting another affluent from the mountains which border on the Corea, it turns to the north-east, and, after a course of 1,000 miles, falls into the Amur.

† The first large town up the river is San-sin, which Mr. Maximowicz.

We had now reached the most southerly bend of the Amur, and had entered a somewhat different climate from that of the Bureya range, for these mountains are cooler than either of the prairies above or below them.*

Below the Sungari the level prairie continues along the left bank of the Amur. On the right bank a range of hills accompanies the river for a distance of 20 miles, and at the villages of Dyrki, Etu, and Kinneli are bold cliffs. The hills are covered with an open forest. Underneath them a luxuriant herbage shoots up to the height of five feet, and in July are seen the numerous red flowers of the Lespedeza, the blue blossoms of vetches, large white umbels of the Biotia, and catkins of the Sanguisorba. On the shores

the naturalist, in 1859, endeavoured to reach, but he was compelled to return on account of his hostile reception by the jealous and exclusive Chinese villagers. I met at Khabarofka a Russian merchant, who had proceeded up the river some distance to purchase corn; an attempt, however, in which he only partially succeeded,—and that little, I understood, through the mediation of a Roman Catholic missionary. By the Chinese treaty with Russia the Sungari is declared to be open for the purposes of commerce. It thus presents an unoccupied field for some enterprising pioneer who will thus push his way into Manchuria.

* In the Bureya district in August thick fogs rest on the river in the morning, and the nights are cold. The amount of snow throughout the winter is about 4½ feet or more. The climate, however, on the Amur, which is most favourable, is that found between the mouths of the Sungari and Ussuri, though even here the river is ice-bound during five or six months. At Khabarofka it freezes about the end of November and opens in the beginning of May. Snow covers the ground to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half, and even 2½ feet in exceptional winters. Below the mouth of the Sungari the Amur divides into several streams, and many islands have been formed in its bed. The river, too, changes its course, and runs to the north-east, which seems to be a direct continuation of the Sungari. In fact, this river has been claimed by some as the parent river. The Russians, however, could well afford to allow the Chinese to establish this relationship, for then the Tsar would be entitled to the greater part of Manchuria, the treaty giving Russia all the land "north of the Amur," to which John Chinaman would probably object.

f the islands in the river are heaped up the bleached runks of fallen trees and driftwood.

As we drew towards the end of our voyage, we ere approaching likewise the confines of the Amur rovince, which is at once the smallest and least opulous of the provinces of Siberia.* There are 1 stations between Blagovestchensk and Khabarofka, he distance is 560 miles, and I paid for first-class fare £2 10*s.* The largest of the stations and the most mportant is Michael Semenovsk, about 17 miles below he mouth of the Sungari, so named in honour of a Governor-General of Eastern Siberia. It is a military ost, and rejoices in the possession of two iron guns ointing over the river in the direction of China, hough they are said to be utterly useless for purposes f war, and can only be employed for firing salutes.

At this place we put off some of our passengers, and among them the wife of the artillery officer whom we had first seen as far back as Kansk, and with whom we had been brought in contact on the Baikal, and again on the Shilka. It looked as if our acquaintance was now to cease, but it was not so; for when I reached Vladivostock this lady appeared again, at a distance of more than 3,000 miles from where we first met. I had made another acquaintance also since leaving Blagovestchensk, one Baron Stackelberg. This gentleman had been sent to the Amur to put the screw

* It has an area of 173,000 square miles, and is about the size of Spain, its population amounting to only 22,000 persons. In this last respect it contrasts favourably with the neighbouring province of Yakutsk, which is eight times as large, but has only about 1,200 more inhabitants. The one town of the province is Blagovestchensk, where the Governor resides. The other habitations form mere villages situated on the banks of the river.

on in the matter of excise. At the annexation of the country, the Government was so anxious to people it that they promised emigrants immunity from taxes for 20 years, and this time was nearly up. The Baron had, therefore, to put things in order, and had been doing so since 1875, when he crossed Siberia by land and happened to fall in and travel with Mr. Milne, to whose journey across Europe and Asia I have alluded in a previous chapter. The Baron spoke pleasingly of his journey with his English friend, as he called him, and he was evidently disposed to give a second Englishman a welcome. He spoke French fluently, and gave me some interesting statistics about alcohol, which is the principal source of the Government revenue both in Russia and Siberia.* I hesitate, from my own experience, to endorse the opinion sometimes expressed, that the Russians, as a people, are more intemperate than the English. Among them, it is true, the vice seems to pass for less sin and for less shame than with us; but England has the unenviable

* "Alcohol" is spirit obtained from corn and potatoes, and has 95 degrees of strength; "vodka" is the same spirit weakened by water to 40 degrees, and filtered. A bottle of alcohol costs at Vladivostock 2*s.* 6*d.*; a bottle of vodka 1*s.* 3*d.* The Baron was an Esthonian by birth, and he pointed out the remarkable fact that, whilst Esthonia relatively produced more brandy than did other Russian provinces, yet it had the smallest number of shops for its sale. Whether any moral could be drawn from this tale I know not; but I subsequently find on the same opening of my journal two noteworthy entries respecting the Amur. One is that the excise taxes for the Sea-coast province amounted in 1878 to rather more than 20 times the amount realized by all the remaining taxes put together; and the other is the official return to the Emperor, that "the chief causes of crime in the province are gambling and drunkenness." Comment is needless, and I do not here stay to make any, except to observe how humiliating it is that any country which calls itself Christian, be it Russia or England, should derive its largest revenue from that which most demoralizes its subjects.

notoriety of arresting in one year 203,989 persons for crimes in which drunkenness is entered as part of the charges! I can present no statistics on the number of drunkards in Russia. One does see a great many, certainly, on a festival. I was lamenting this to a Russian lady, when she acknowledged its truth, but reminded me that with them the evil is confined chiefly to men; and without doubt, whatever comparison may be instituted between the two countries with regard to drunkenness among the male sex, they have no town in Russia which has more drunken women than men—that apprehends in a single year 6,276 females to 5,537 males, or 32 drunkards a day! For this, alas! we must look to England—to Liverpool. Still, drunkenness is a most fruitful cause of crime in Russia, as witnessed by what I saw and heard in the prisons at Tiumen, Tobolsk, and Barnaul; and it may very well be questioned whether the evil habits among Russians of gambling, drunkenness, and idleness are not in part to be traced to the very large number of holy days in their calendar, on many of which they abstain from work more completely than on Sundays. They fast rigorously and long, and then, at the close, break out in excess.

Teetotalism has not yet made much way among the Russian people or clergy. I chanced, indeed, to be dining in Petersburg in company with a gentleman, who said that the priest of his country parish was an abstainer, whom he sometimes invited to dinner; and when he would give him a little red wine for his stomach's sake, the priest declined, saying that if he did not abstain altogether he might soon become a drunkard, because invited so often to drink by his

parishioners. This case, however, was sufficiently uncommon to cause a lady present to observe that she had never heard of an abstaining priest before. Accordingly, it is with great satisfaction I have observed from the newspapers that the matter has been under the consideration of the present Emperor, and that his Majesty has called in certain experts to advise on the subject. God send them help against this national curse, the demon of intemperance!

My meeting with Baron Stackelberg had an important bearing on my wanderings; for I had intended, on arriving at Khabarofka, to leave the Amur, and proceed direct up the Ussuri to Vladivostock. But so it was not to be, and in less than 24 hours I found myself going 1,250 miles out of my way, and in the opposite direction. But before leaving the Chinese border I must say something of the southern bank of the Amur, concerning which and its inhabitants I have hitherto been almost silent.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MANCHURIAN FRONTIER.

Manchuria and its aboriginal inhabitants.—Their history.—The Daurians.—The Manchu.—Visit to Sakhalin-Ula-Hotun.—Manchu dress.—Music.—Conveyances.—Articles of commerce.—Treatment of dead.—Boats.—Methods of fishing.—Archery.—Town of Aigun.—Buildings.—Temples.—Difficulties of access.

I HAVE said very little on what we saw in descending the Amur of the Daurians and Manchu, because I thought it better to reserve a separate chapter for these extra-Siberian people. Manchuria is bounded on the north by the Amur, on the east by the Ussuri, on the west by Dauria and Mongolia, and on the south by Corea and the Yellow Sea. It is, in fact, the country north of Peking, from which city the territory is governed, and with which its history is closely connected.*

* The Chinese applied to the eastern Mongols the name of *Dun-Khu*, whence the name *Tunguses*. And wild they must have been in early times, if the account be true that during the winter they lived in subterraneous dwellings, and smeared their bodies with pigs' fat to protect themselves from cold. The first amelioration in their condition is said to have been due to the conquests of the Coreans, who, in their wars with China, made use of these northern neighbours. When, however, the Coreans fell under the sway of the Chinese, in 677 A.D., the Tungusians, who were subsequently known as the Manchu, retired northwards to the Shan-alin mountains. With the help of many Coreans, they founded the empire of the Bokhai, and the country became one of the most flourishing kingdoms on the eastern sea. The heirs of the power of the Bokhai were the Jurjis, who founded the empire of Kin, and were known as Kin, or Golden Tatars. They dominated over Northern China in the 12th

A few words should be said, perhaps, first of the Daurians, whose territory we passed whilst on the Upper Amur. Of old they were settled along both banks of the river, and doubtless may here and there be found still on the northern bank; but for the sake of clearness I have preferred to treat of them on the southern bank in their proximity to the Manchu, from whom they can scarcely be distinguished in appearance, and with whom they have more in common than with the natives of the north. The Daurians and Manchu, Mr. Howorth says, are of the same stock in every way. The division is a political one only. The Daurians probably represent the section who paid tribute to the Chinese Court, and the Manchu those who were free. Mr. Wahl says that "Daours" is a name given to the Tunguses of the Amur by the Buriats. The Daurians are taller and stronger than the Oronchons, the countenance is oval and more intellectual, and the cheeks are less broad. The nose is rather prominent, and the eyebrows straight. The

century, and were the ancestors of the Manchu. It is not necessary to follow the vicissitudes of this kingdom through the centuries that followed; but in 1618 the power of the Manchu was so well established, that their king made war with China, and repeatedly defeated the emperor. Some years later, a revolution broke out in China, in the midst of which, in 1643, the emperor committed suicide; whereupon the imperial party called in the aid of the Manchu, who drove the rebels out of Peking. The Chinese general was then left to pursue them further south, whilst the Manchu chief, finding the throne vacant, took it for himself and kept it, and the Manchu dynasty reigns in China to this day. These events were followed by very remarkable consequences to the Manchu country and people; for though by conquest they had gained a neighbouring throne, yet the Chinese managed so to fuse their conquerors with themselves, and to get possession of their country, that the Manchu, during the two centuries they have reigned in China, may be said to have been working out their own annihilation. Their manners, language, their very country has become Chinese, and some maintain that the Manchu proper are now extinct.

skin is tawny, the hair brown. The lower classes do not shave the head, and their hair resembles an ill-constructed haystack, around which they twist their pigtail. The higher classes shave the head in front and over the temples, but wear a tail.

The Daurians carry on agriculture successfully, and cultivate vegetables and tobacco. They live in houses made of earth, thatched with reeds or thin bamboos, and have the walls whitewashed inside. The houses are not divided into compartments, and the fireplace is outside, near the door, the smoke from it passing through a pipe into the house. Two iron kettles always form part of the household utensils, one of them for heating water for tea, the other for cooking the food. The windows are large and square, of paper soaked in oil. They are hinged at the top, and are propped open for ventilation. The religion of the Daurians is Shamanism. We saw their canoes from time to time when stopping at wood stations on the Upper Amur, but recognized few of the people themselves.

We saw many Manchu from the Zeya to the Khingan mountains. The southern shores of the Amur are inhabited by Manchu and Chinese, the latter being either exiles or their descendants.* On the south bank of the Amur, opposite Blagovestchensk, is a

* This part of the Amur was erected into a penal colony by the Chinese Government soon after the evacuation of Albazin by the Russians in 1680. Above and below Aigun are 25 or 30 clusters of Manchu dwellings, some of the villages having from 10 to 50 or even 100 houses. In other cases the houses stand solitary, like the Cossack picket-posts I afterwards passed on the Ussuri; and I presume they serve the Chinese for the same purpose in watching the frontier. A noticeable feature about these pickets is that, if there be only a single habitation, there is in the corner of the garden a small building like a sentry-box, which is a temple containing an idol or picture, and where worship is offered.

small Manchu town, called *Sakhalin-Ula-Hotun* (City of the Black River). The Manchu and Chinese formerly called the river above the Sungari "Sakhalin-Ula." The Goldi called the Amur "Mongo," and the Gilyaks "Mamoo." The name Amur was given by the Russians, and is considered a corruption of the Gilyak word. I paid a visit to Sakhalin-Ula on the evening our steamer stayed in the vicinity. It is said to have less than 2,000 inhabitants. I was accompanied by Mr. Niellsen, from the telegraph office at Blagovestchensk, who was slightly known to one of the Manchu merchants. The town stretches a mile along the bank, but extends only a few paces back from the river. It consists of a single street, and is anything but picturesque; for the fences, made of log-frames and covered with board, shut out the view of the gardens, in which are grown millet, maize, radishes, onions, leeks, garlic, Spanish pepper, and cabbages. The walls of the houses are of log plastered with mud, and the windows usually of paper, but occasionally of glass.

The roofs of the buildings are covered with thatch of wheaten straw, and the town is embowered in elms, birches, maples, poplars, and wild apple-trees. This contrasts favourably with the Russian town, where there are few trees except those in the park. Timber, for use of both Russians and Manchu, is cut in the forests 60 miles up the river, and rafted down. They keep plenty of fowls and pigs, and a few horned cattle used for ploughing. Sakhalin-Ula abounds in gardens, which supply the market of Blagovestchensk. Once a month, during the full moon, the Manchu cross the river and open a fair, which lasts seven days. They sell the Russians wheaten and buckwheat flour, barley,

beans, oats, eggs, walnuts, vegetables, Ussuri apples, fowls, pigs, cows, and horses. Thus the Russians usually lay in a month's supply; but should they require anything out of fair-time, the Manchu are not only ready to supply it, but do so at lower prices than the sums asked by the Russian merchants.

As we walked along the street we met a solitary woman, who ran quickly out of the way, as if afraid of us; and having made a long *détour* from the road, regained it, and continued her journey behind us. The Manchu women dress like the Chinese, in a blue cotton gown, with short loose sleeves, above which the well-to-do wear a cape or mantle of silk, reaching to the waist. The hair is brushed up, fastened on the top of the head in a bunch, and is secured by a comb ornamented with beads and hair-needles, and decked with gay ribbons, with real or artificial flowers. The earrings, finger-rings, and bracelets exhibit much taste. The women are in the habit of carrying their youngest children about with them, tied on the back. The girls, on being released from swaddling-clothes, are dressed like their mothers; but the boys, up to six or seven years of age, wear only a pair of loose pantaloons.

The costume of the men is a long blue coat of cotton, loose linen trowsers fastened at the knee or made into leggings, and Chinese boots of skin. They wear also a kind of vest and a belt, to which is attached a case containing a knife, Chinese chopsticks, tinder, a small copper pipe, and tobacco. Both sexes are fond of smoking, and, as in China, constantly carry a fan.

As we passed one of the houses, we saw a Manchu, sitting out in the cool of the evening, enjoying his music, which he produced by scraping a stringed instru-

ment of the violin order, though it is no compliment to the fiddle to mention the two together. At Khabarofka I saw other musical instruments, coming nearer to the shape of the banjo. One, with three strings, had a long handle of rosewood, and a drum about six inches in diameter. The drum was covered on either side with serpents' skin, but if its sound was no more pleasing than that of the instrument at Sakhalin-Ula, I fear it would generally be thought trying to English ears.

By dint of inquiry, we found the merchant to whom my companion was known, and, on entering his yard, saw some Mongolian sheep, with their enormous tails. It was not difficult to understand particularly fat Thibetan sheep needing a little carriage upon which to support this appendage. One could wish them better conveyances, however, than the Manchu carts, which are of a very clumsy description. They have two wheels fixed to the axletree, all turning together. They are drawn by oxen, and move slowly, creaking along. The Manchu have besides a rough kind of travelling carriage for persons of distinction, a two-wheeled affair, not long enough to allow one to lie at full length, nor with covering high enough to permit one to sit upright. It has no springs, the frame resting on the axle. The sides are curtained with cloth, having little windows or peep-holes. A few cushions and hard pillows inside serve to diminish the effect of jolting. The shafts are like those of a common dray, with a sort of shelf to support the driver sitting sideways about ten inches behind the horse. The wheel tires are of surprising breadth and thickness, and cogged as if made for use in a machine. In fact, a "machine" is exactly the word for the whole concern; and on coming out of the said

machine after a long journey, and its accompanying jolting over execrable roads, it may well be doubted whether one would not feel bruised "all over alike."

Our merchant friend gave us a hearty welcome, and bade us be seated in his house, which closely resembled the house of the merchant with whom we dined at Maimatchin. Usually, when a guest enters a Manchu dwelling, one of the women fills and lights a pipe, and having taken a few puffs herself, and wiped the mouth-piece with her hand or apron, presents it. The people in the house we visited were perfectly ready to show us anything and everything we desired to see. One of them was writing, with Indian ink and pen of split reed, or pencil of squirrel's hair, when, upon observing that I watched him closely, he wrote my name in Chinese on a piece of paper, and gave it me as a souvenir, whilst I did the same in English, and so returned the compliment. They presented me also a bundle of joss-sticks for making a perfume, and which they burn before their idols.

Adjoining the room in which we sat was the shop, where they arrayed me in silk dressing-gowns of splendid quality. Among the articles the Manchu sell to the Russians are silk stuffs, peltry, artificial flowers, felt shoes, matting, etc.; but I saw nothing that so tempted me as the silk dressing-gowns. I forbore to purchase one only because my companion told me that I should get them better and find a larger selection in Japan. We contented ourselves, therefore, with admiring them, to the amusement, apparently, of the Manchu, for they repeatedly imitated not only our speaking but our words and exclamations of surprise, and even our manner of laughing.

I heard in this town of a strange method of treatment of the dead, for Mr. Niellsen told me they were kept in the house for several days; they are then half buried in a funereal hut in the garden or field. The corpse is daily visited by the relatives, who bring all sorts of food and drink. The food is put to the mouth of the deceased with a spoon, and the drink is placed in small cups outside the hut. A few weeks pass in this manner, and then the decomposed corpse is buried deeper.

Steaming away from Sakhalin-Ula, we passed several kinds of Manchu boats, which present a lively appearance on the river. The junks for heavy merchandise are about 60 feet long, from 12 to 14 feet wide, with high bows and sterns, and a large mast, 40 feet high, amidships. Most of them are built on the Sungari, and have a small hut-like construction at the stern. They draw from three to four feet of water, and are manned by a crew of ten,—eight for pushing at the poles, one to steer, and a pilot on the bows to sound and announce the depth of water. Smaller than the junks are the merchants' boats, with an awning over the state-room, in which the merchant lives, whilst his crew and cargo are stowed in the forepart of the craft. A good deal of valuable merchandise is sometimes carried on board. I remember going to one of them at a stopping-place where the owner showed me a gold watch, said to be of English make, about which, however, when asked for an opinion, I was bound to express my doubts. I thought perhaps the man of business might be disposed to purchase my revolver, for which I had had no use, and found it somewhat in the way. I offered it, therefore, to him for what it cost me. He was accustomed only to the prices of

he common Russian revolvers, whereas mine was of good English make. The figure, therefore, alarmed him, though, perhaps, after an hour's patience, we might have come to terms; but the whistle sounded, and I had abruptly to close our negotiations and make for the steamer.

A Manchu fishing-boat is made of the trunk of a hollowed-out tree, cut in two pieces, fastened with wooden pegs, and secured from leaking with pitch. The small ones are propelled by one man, with a double-bladed paddle. They also make flat-bottomed boats of planks. Most of them carry flags or streamers, and some have dragons' heads on their bows.

The traveller sometimes sees a novel method of fishing by the Manchu, who sit perched on a tripod of tent-poles, ten feet high, placed at the edge of the river. Here the fisherman waits, like a heron, watching for fish, which he catches with pole, net, or spear, according to circumstances. One would suppose the seat must be very uncomfortable, but these tripods, tied at the top, are seen on many sandbars and shoals, showing it to be one of the recognized methods of fishing. I saw also, below Sakhalin, another curious fishing machine, something like a hand-cart, with two small wheels and long handles. A frame over the axle sustained a long pole, from which was suspended a net about the size of a shrimp net. The machine could thus be wheeled into the water, and the snare lowered, after which the net was lifted again with its catch. During winter, when the river is covered with ice, the Daurians practise a third method of fishing, known to the Cossacks as *chekacheni*, or "malleting." Where the ice is transparent, the fish may be seen

almost immovable near the surface of the water beneath it. A few blows on the ice with a mallet stun the fish, a hole is then made, and they are taken out with the hand or a small net.

The Manchu are excellent archers. At the military stations trials of skill take place periodically in the presence of the Mandarins and others.* "To know how to shoot an arrow," writes a Manchu author, "is the first and most important knowledge for a Tatar to acquire." I presume, however, this was written before the introduction of the clumsy Manchu matchlock.

Fourteen miles below the Zeya, and a few hours after leaving Blagovestchensk, our steamer arrived at Aigun, the chief town of the Manchu on the Amur, and once possessing considerable strength. It was formerly the capital of the Chinese province of the Amur, but the seat of government was transferred, some five-and-thirty years ago, to Tsi-tsi-har. It has now a population estimated at 15,000. The town is built on a bank some 8 or 10 feet above high-water mark. The tableland behind the town extends to mountains in a serrated chain, which show themselves

* Three straw men of life-size are placed in a straight line, at distances of 20 or 30 paces the one from the other. The mounted archer is on a line with them about 15 feet from the first figure, his bow bent, and his shaft upon the string. The signal being given, he puts his horse to a gallop, and discharges his arrow at the first figure; without checking his horse's speed, he then takes a second arrow from his quiver, places it to the bow, and discharges it at the second figure, and so with the third; and all this while the horse is going at full speed. From the first figure to the second the archer has barely time for drawing his arrow, fixing, and discharging it; so that when he shoots he has generally to turn somewhat on his saddle, and as to the third shot he discharges it altogether in the old Parthian fashion. Yet for a competitor to be deemed a good archer, says M. Huc, it is essential that he should fire an arrow into every one of the three figures.

as a background to the picture upon the southern horizon.

The Government buildings and several temples are surrounded by a double row of palisades, in the form of a square; and outside this are several hundred mud houses. The town has a gloomy appearance. The houses are nearly all of but one storey, and stand in square yards surrounded by fences of stakes or wickerwork. The only relief to the eye is produced by the gaily-painted temples, which are surrounded with trees, apparently sacred groves, the more noticeable as growing timber is scarce in this region. The temples are square buildings erected with rather more care than private houses. The walls are made of thin poles set up side by side, with the interstices filled with clay, and smoothened. The sloping roof is thatched with straw. As you enter you find yourself in an ante-room, separated from the inner compartment by a curtain running along the width of the temple, and suspended from slender pillars. The curtain being drawn aside, there is seen a table against the wall, upon or over which is a picture of a deity; and on the table lie dried stems and leaves of Artemisia, and some Chinese coins. There is also a semi-globular vessel of metal, with three holes on each side, which is struck by the worshipper, after he has made his obeisance, to attract the notice of the god.*

* Mr. Knox was shown one of the temples of Aigun, which he describes as a building 15 feet by 30 feet, with a red curtain at the door, and a thick carpet of matting over a brick pavement. The altar being veiled, the covering was lifted to allow him to see the inscription. Several pictures adorned the walls, and there were lanterns painted in gaudy colors. Outside also were paintings over the door, representing Chinese landscapes. The windows were of lattice work, the roof had a dragon's head at each end of the ridge, and a Mosaic pavement extended

I observed at Aigun, as at Maimatchin, the proximity of the temple and the theatre, and noticed poles standing in front of the Government houses and temples. But I am not clear whether they are merely flag-poles or whether they are for a purpose mentioned by Mr. Ravenstein, who alludes to poles fixed on the screens facing the doors of private houses, the upper parts of which poles are ornamented by the Manchu with the skulls of beasts of prey, small flags, and horsehair, and during prayer are hoisted whilst the worshippers lie prostrate.

Very few foreigners have succeeded in gaining admittance to Aigun. Mr. Collins, with Captain Fulyhelm, made a resolute but fruitless endeavour to do so.*

This exclusiveness, however, appears to have abated in after years; for in 1866 Mr. Knox had no difficulty in visiting the town, even when the Governor happened to be absent. He speaks of the streets as having some dry spots, but that otherwise, by reason of the mud, he should describe the measurement of the "broadway" of Aigun as about two miles long, 50 feet wide, and "two feet deep." The shops in one of the principal streets

round the interior of the building. On the exterior of the Buddhist temple we visited near Kiakhta, I observed a symbol in the form of two deer standing on either side of a tree, but I did not notice it again elsewhere.

* Their landing caused a great sensation, and the people gathered in crowds. The Governor received them in a pavilion, and was dressed in richly-figured silk robes, with the cap surmounted by a crystal ball and peacocks' feather. Refreshments were offered, and among them small cups of samchoo or rice wine, and all they said was taken down by scribes; but they were not permitted to visit the city. Previously to this, Admiral Putiatin, of the Russian navy, defied the authorities, and entered the city, as it were, sword in hand; for, permission having been denied him on the pretence that he would not be safe against the insults of the people, the admiral took with him four armed men, and went through the streets. It was on a similar pretence that Mr. Collins was diverted from his purpose.

have open fronts. Here the merchandise is exposed, and the merchant, attired in silks, gravely smokes his pipe till a purchaser enters. Dragons and other figures, cut in paper, are fixed to poles surmounting the shops, and paper lanterns hang across the street. The town has a guard-house and military quarters, and there was pointed out to me, from the deck of the steamer, the fortress and gateway leading to the Government quarter. Over the gateway was a small room, like the drawbridge room in a castle of the middle ages. Twenty men could be lodged there to shoot arrows or throw hot water on an invading foe.

I was not fortunate in getting into the city—not, however, through any difficulty with the authorities (as Baron Stackelberg offered to telegraph to the Chinese Governor to give permission for me to enter), but, owing to delays, our boat was so behind time that the captain could not be induced to lose a couple of hours for the purpose. We stopped, therefore, only a few minutes to take in passengers. Crowds of Manchu and Chinese came to the bank, some of the women having very remarkable head-gear. Men with a cloth about the waist were washing their plump little Manchu horses in the river; and we saw a number of junks drawn up on the banks. These represent some of the Chinese naval force on the Amur,—but only *some*, I suppose—because, when the Russians obtained the river, the Chinese transferred their navy to the Sungari. Towards this river we proceeded, after leaving Aigun, and arrived, as I have said, on the following day at Khabarofka, which may now be called the military capital of the Sea-coast province.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PRIMORSK OR SEA-COAST PROVINCE.

Fuller treatment of this province.—Boundaries and dimensions.—Mountains, bays, and rivers.—Climate.—Fauna and flora.—Aboriginal and Russian population.—Government.—Food products.—Imports.—Taxes.—Civil government.—Health of the people.

A STORY is told of a certain preacher who, on mounting his afternoon pulpit, discovered he had brought again the manuscript from which he preached in the morning, whereupon, rising to the occasion, he announced his intention to redeliver the morning's discourse; and, said he, "*I have a particular reason for doing so.*" History does not relate what followed; but I would advertise the reader that I purpose to treat more fully of the Primorsk than of the other provinces of Siberia, and "I have a particular reason for doing so"; the "particular reason" in my case being that I know, personally, a great deal more of this province than of the rest. Through other regions I passed as rapidly as possible, never continuing long in one place; but on the sea-coast I lived, moved, and had my habitation for several weeks. I was stationary simply because I could not get forward, and used my leisure to read up Siberia and arrange notes. Moreover, I had the great advantage of staying with persons who spoke English, who had lived in Asiatic Russia for many years, who knew the country well, and could therefore inform me upon Russian affairs.

Nor was this all, for I was brought in frequent contact with military and naval officers who spoke French and English, and during my stay at Vladivostock was almost a daily guest at the Governor's house, and so was enabled to gather information respecting the condition of the province from official sources.

The Littoral, or Sea-coast province, which the Russians call "The Primorsk," is a strip of seaboard, beginning on the frontier of Corea, and continuing northwards along the coast of Manchuria, round the Sea of Okhotsk and Kamchatka, and terminating at the Chaunskaia Bay in the Arctic Ocean, about 700 miles west of Behring's Straits.* The general aspect of the country is mountainous throughout. Along the Manchurian coast, at a distance of from 25 to 80 miles of the sea, runs the Sikhota-Alin range, a continuation of the Shangan-Alin mountains. The western slope is the birthplace of many streams, which run into the Lower Amur and Ussuri. The eastern slopes drain into the channel of Tartary, those rivers entering the sea having a short course, and being navigable only near the mouth. These mountains attain an elevation of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet. West of the Okhotsk Sea runs the Stanovoi range, which is a continuation of the tableland lying to the north of the Amur, and is estimated, according to Mr. Ravenstein, as

* From this point its inland border runs along the crests of the Stanovoi range to the 55th degree of latitude, then continues southwards to the Little Khingan mountains, thence in a line to the Ussuri and Sungacha, through Lake Khanka, and so to Corea. The length of the province from north to south exceeds 2,300 miles. Its widest part, taken at right angles from the shore, does not exceed 400 miles, whilst at its narrowest, on the Sea of Okhotsk, the western border in some places is not more than 30 miles inland. The area of the province is 733,000 square miles, or about six times as large as the British possessions in Europe.

having an elevation of from 1,000 to 2,000 feet, the highest peaks reaching perhaps to 5,000 or 6,000 feet. Besides these ranges, there are in the peninsula of Kamchatka nearly 40 mountains, evidently volcanic, though not more than a dozen volcanoes now throw out scoria.

On the sea-coast are several bays suitable for harbours, which might become of commercial importance if the district were sufficiently colonized, and good means of communication opened over the mountains and forests of the Littoral.*

The principal rivers of the province are the Ussuri, the Lower Amur, with its largest tributary the Amgun, and in the far north the Anadir, which runs into Behring's Sea. The Primorsk has one or two lakes on the Arctic Circle, also Lake Kizi, which almost connects the Lower Amur with the Gulf of Tartary at Castries Bay, and Lake Khanka, the largest of them all, out of which flows the Sungacha, an important affluent of the Ussuri. What marshes there are in the province are found on the left bank of the Amur.

The variations of climate must of course be very considerable over a tract of country which in the north lies within the Arctic Circle to the 70th parallel, whilst its most southerly point is nearer the equator than the Pole, being situated in latitude 43°, as far south, that

* Thus there are, beginning in the south, Vladivostock and Paseat, and continuing up the Manchurian coast past Olga, Vladimir, and Barracouta Bays, we have De Castries Bay, 135 miles south of Nikolaefsk. De Castries was discovered and surveyed by La Perouse in 1787. It affords good and safe anchorage, and is a kind of ocean port to Nikolaefsk. Other ports further north are Ayan and Okhotsk, and Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka, Olga, Vladivostock, and Paseat are called "open ports," but all of them in winter are ice-bound, unless it be Paseat, which is not much frozen, nor for long.

is, as the Pyrenees. Of the 14 meteorological observatories in Siberia, two are situated in the Primorsk, at Nikolaefsk and Vladivostock. For meteorological information from further north we are indebted to travellers, especially to Baron Nordenskjold.* The climate of Nikolaefsk cannot be recommended to those in search of a mild one.† During the eight months of winter keen winds prevail, bringing snowstorms of such violence and density that I heard of a man losing himself in crossing the street from the club to his own house. The snow lies frequently from four to five feet deep. I stayed at Nikolaefsk from the 13th to the 30th August, during which time the summer was unusually cold. On several days it rained, and, when taking an evening stroll, I did not feel an Ulster coat too warm.‡

Descending ten degrees further south to Vladivostock, we find the summer extending to six and a half months, but with an annual temperature about ten degrees lower than at Marseilles, which is on the same parallel.§

Thus it will be seen that even in the most southerly

* Where the Vega was frozen in, west of Behring's Straits, the temperature sank before the 28th November to 14°·8 below zero, and the newly-formed ice was already two feet thick. On Christmas Day the temperature fell to 31°, and in January to 50°·8, both below zero; whilst the average temperatures for October, November, December, and January were 22°·6 and 2°·1 above, and 9° and 13°·2 below zero respectively.

† At Nikolaefsk, in August 1877, the temperature reached no higher than 82°·8, and sank to 45°·5, the mean temperature of the month being 61°·9. The greatest heat of the year was 88°·2, and occurred in July, and the greatest cold registered was in February, when the thermometer fell to 26°·9 below zero. The mean temperature for the year was only 30°2.

‡ On the night of August 19th, the thermometer registered 45°·5, and during the preceding day had not risen above 50°. At Greenwich, on the same date, the thermometer registered 49°·7 in the night, and 70° on the preceding day.

§ The maximum temperature at Vladivostock, in August 1877, was

portion of the Primorsk the winter climate is severe. The Bay of Peter the Great, it is true, is not frozen at a certain distance from the shore at any period of the year; yet ice is formed upon its creeks and inlets at the beginning of December, and for more than a hundred days ships are locked in the port of Vladivostock. On the other hand, the summer heat on the Manchurian coast is very great, and rises in the port of Olga to more than 96°.

The climate of the Lower Primorsk is more than commonly dependent on two influences: that of the prevailing winds, and of the temperature of the neighbouring seas. The warm Kuro Scivo, or Japan current, soon after it passes the Loo Choo islands, divides, and a small part enters the Sea of Japan, and, skirting its eastern shore, passes out through La Perouse Strait to reunite itself with the main stream that has kept to the eastward of the Japan archipelago. Under the name of "the North Pacific drift," this Japan current afterwards passes a little south of the Kurile and Alentian Isles, and then turns southward along the western coast of North America. From the north-east corner of the Sea of Okhotsk two cold currents start and run—the one along the coast of the mainland of Siberia, the other down the west side of Kamchatka. Sakhalin is thus on both shores washed by these cold waters, which continue their course southward along the western shore of the Sea of Japan, round the Corea, past the entrance of the Yellow Sea, until, near the island of Formosa, they mingle

89°·1 (the highest of the year); and the minimum was 57°, the mean for the month being 68°·7. In January the degrees of cold registered were 10°·8 below zero, and the mean temperature for the year was 41°·5.

with the monsoon drifts of the China Sea. The effect of this body of cold water along the Siberian coast is obvious, and we find the winter climate far more severe than in corresponding latitudes on the western side of the Pacific or in the Niphon, and the southern islands of Japan. The prevailing winds in winter are from the north and east, and, passing as they do over this same cold sea-water, they get chilled, and add to the rigour of the season. In summer the winds are generally from the west and south-west, and in July the south-west monsoon even extends to the Sea of Okhotsk; and the temperature is abnormally above that of corresponding latitudes. If, however, the climate of the Lower Primorsk and of Eastern Siberia is remarkable for its extremes of cold and heat, drought and humidity, it has at least the advantage of regularity in its yearly progress, and has none of the abrupt changes of temperature met with in Western Siberia. The dry cold of winter, the humid heat of summer, are maintained without sudden changes.*

To the phenomena of the particular climate of the sea-coast correspond naturally the distinctive features of its fauna and flora. The forests one passes through in the basin of the Amur are not, like the *taigas*, sloping towards the Frozen Ocean, composed uniformly

* In the least rainy month, for instance, February, the precipitation, whether of snow or rain, represents at Nertchinsk Zavod only one fifty-eighth part of the rainfall of the wet season. So again at Vladivostock the difference between the snowfall of winter and the rainfall of summer is still greater, the snow representing a quantity about 840 times less than the rain. In 1858, Venyukoff experienced on the Ussuri 45 consecutive wet days, and the annual rains drench the harvests of the Cossacks of the Ussuri, who have not yet learned to imitate the Chinese in accommodating their agriculture to the alternations of the seasons.

of the same species of conifers; but the kinds of trees are very diverse, though their distribution is little varied. With the fir, pitch pine, cedar, and larch are mixed not only the Russian birch, but also the oak, elm, hornbeam, ash, maple, lime, and poplar, some of which grow to the height of 100 feet, with trunks more than a yard in diameter. The bark of the larch is almost as valuable to the tanner as that of oak, and also produces the substance called Venice turpentine, which flows abundantly when the lower parts of the trunks of old trees are wounded. A kind of marrow also exudes from its leaves in the shape of white flakes, which are ultimately converted into small lumps. In the southern parts of the Ussuri country, and on the slopes of the Sikhota Alin, deciduous trees outnumber the conifers. The forest pines are often draped with wild vines, whose grapes ripen, though the cultivation of the vine has not yet been successful. On the Upper Ussuri the Chinese have plantations of ginseng. In the woods grow hazels, peach trees, and wild pears; and what orchards there yet are about the villages show that the Ussuri district might become, for the product of fruits, one of the richest countries in the world.

But the glory of the Lower Primorsk is the wealth of herbaceous plants which grow on the alluvial soils on the banks and the islands of its rivers. Umbelliferous plants, mugwort, roses, cereals of various kinds, form a mass of vegetation to the height of 8 or 9 feet, penetrable only axe in hand, or along the track of some wild animal. The wild boar, the stag, the roebuck hide themselves in these tall herbs better even than in the forest. The tiger as well as the panther

THE SIBERIAN LARCH. *Page* 566.

inhabit the bushy herbage of the Ussuri, and there meet also the bear and the sable. Thus the representatives of the south mingle with those from the north in this rich fauna, belonging at once to Siberia and to China.

As regards the inhabitants of the Sea-coast province, in the south are Chinese, Manzas, Tazas, and Coreans, who are constantly travelling, and so cannot well be counted; but, calculating from the registers of births and deaths, their number is estimated at 62,000. North of these, on the Ussuri, are the Goldi, and, on the Lower Amur, another race called Gilyaks, of whom I shall hereafter speak particularly. Proceeding round the Sea of Okhotsk, we come to the territories of the Lamuti, Tunguses, and Yakutes; and then reaching the north-east corner of Siberia, we have three other peoples—the Kamchatdales to the south of the peninsula, with the Koriaks above them, and furthest north the Chukchees. Besides these might be mentioned a few Orochi about the mouth of the Amur, and the Aïnos of Sakhalin and the Kurile islands. Owing to the wandering habits of these tribes, no census can be obtained, but from the church books their number, including both sexes, is estimated at 44,000.*

The province is divided into seven uyezds, and the

* These statistics are taken from the Government books, and they refer to the native population. The Almanack for 1880 gives to the province 76 populated places, and the number of the Russian inhabitants was handed to me at Nikolaefsk, from Government sources, as 20,000, made up of 10,000 naval and military, 1,200 Government officials, 1,800 townspeople, and 7,000 peasants. In the whole province in 1878 the number of (Russian) marriages was 223, excluding those of soldiers and convicts. The number of births was 1,322, of which 96 were illegitimate; and the number of deaths 545 males and 447 females, in all 992, giving a net increase of 330 to the Russian population.

principal towns, beginning from the south, are Vladivostock, Khabarofka, Sophiisk, Nikolaefsk, Ayan, Okhotsk, and Petropavlovsk. The Littoral was erected into a province in 1857, and placed under a Governor who was at once Admiral of the Fleet, Commander of the military forces, and Head of Civil Affairs; and this was the condition of things in 1879—Admiral Erdmann being Governor, and residing at Vladivostock. The military command, however, has since been separated, and given to General Tichmeneff, who resides, I am told, at Khabarofka.

Proceeding now to the natural products of the Primorsk, and the sources of sustenance to its population, we find that agriculture holds a very different place in the upper, middle, and lower parts of the country. The Upper Primorsk extends from Behring's Straits down to Nikolaefsk, and produces no corn. The inhabitants live by hunting, the fur trade, or on grain supplied by the Government.

The Middle Primorsk extends from Nikolaefsk to Khabarofka, which means virtually the basin of the Lower Amur. Only the Russian subjects till the ground, the total cereal produce for the year 1878 being 327 tons, together with 811 tons of potatoes. The cost of meat in this district is from 5*d.* to 9*d.* per English pound, according to the season. The Lower or Southern Primorsk is populated by Ussuri Cossacks, and by voluntary and involuntary settlers. This is the most productive part of the province, the yield for 1878 being more than 1,000 tons of corn and 800 tons of potatoes. Meat costs from 4*d.* to 6d. per lb. Three qualities of wheaten flour are used throughout the Primorsk—the first and second of which are imported

from America. About 15,000 fifty-pound bags (say 330 tons) are sold yearly in Nikolaefsk, the best costing from 4*d.* to 6*d.* per lb., the second from 3*d.* to 3½*d.*, and the third quality, grown at home, from 1½*d.* to 2½*d.* per lb. The price of rye-flour at Nikolaefsk

A DVORNIK, OR RUSSIAN HOUSE-PORTER.

and Sophiisk varies from 1½*d.* to 2*d.* per lb. On the Ussuri it costs rather less, and north of Nikolaefsk 2*d.* per lb. is asked.

Throughout the province the price of fish is from 9*s.* to 24*s.* per cwt.; butter (not fresh) costs from 10*d.* to 1*s.* 1½*d.* per lb.; black tea from 2*s.* to 4*s.* the Russian

pound, and brick tea from 10*d.* to 1*s.* 2*d.* The price of sugar varies from 6*d.* to 8*d.* per lb. Labour throughout the Littoral is scarce. The cost for a man and horse in summer is 6*s.* per day, but in winter 30*s.* a month and hay for the horse. At Nikolaefsk a man earns 3*s.* as a day's wage; a *dvornik*, or night-watchman, gets as much as £3 10*s.* a month without board, and a man-servant £2 10*s.* a month and his food. At Vladivostock, convict women for domestic servants are paid from 16*s.* to 30*s.* a month board wages; mechanics earn from 3*s.* to 4*s.* a day, and common labourers 2*s.* This last is a decided advance on the 18*s.* or 20*s.* a month paid to the wharf-porters at Nijni Novgorod, who live, however, on 8*s.* a month, eating little but bread and *stchee*, the latter being made of good beef, with an allowance of one pound of meat for each person. A half-drunken man at Nijni told me boastfully that in good times he could earn nearly 2*s.* a day; but just then he could get no regular work, and so he said he had taken to drink!

In addition to the home produce of the Primorsk, the Government also imports largely in anticipation of bad seasons and famine, and for the military.* They have, too, in this province a fund for loan to the aborigines to the annual amount of nearly £3,000, and rather more than this sum as a reserve fund for famine purposes.

I gathered from an official report in manuscript,

* In 1878, salt, rice, and millet were imported to the value of £25,000. To the southern part of the province salt comes from China. The northern part is supplied by a Government contract with a merchant who has a monopoly up to 1887 for rye, salt, gunpowder, and lead. For the supply of the soldiers, the Government imported also overland 636 tons of rye; of oatmeal, 285 tons; and by sea 1,400 tons of rye, and 280 tons of oatmeal. The average cost of flour to the Government is at Sakhalin 4*s.* 3*d.* and at Vladivostock 3*s.* 9*d.* the pood.

which I was courteously permitted to see, some account of the taxes of the province. Personal taxes are paid in the north in money or in furs. In money, in 1878, was paid £28, and in furs the value of nearly £800. The whole of the settlers in the Amur district were to be free from personal taxes, land taxes, and recruiting up to 1881. Hence the land taxes of the province amounted to only £90.*

The report above quoted also treated of the health of the people, from which I noticed that vaccination throughout the province had not been wholly successful, partly for want of good vaccine, and partly from the lack of persons qualified to perform the operation. This latter was not greatly to be wondered at, seeing that the yearly remuneration attached to the appointment of district vaccinator was only two guineas, while the work involved much and difficult travelling. In the *towns* from which reports had come, it appeared that of 375 persons vaccinated, only seven cases had failed.

The total number of (I presume *civil*) patients through the province in 1878 was 319 (215 males and 104 females), of whom 247 recovered, 40 died, 32 were still under treatment; the average time spent in the hospital by each completed case being 31⅓ days.†

* For municipal taxes, police, roads, etc., were paid at Nikolaefsk, £1,582; Vladivostock, £1,500; Sophiisk, £140; Petropavlovsk, £70; Okhotsk, £15; and Ghijiga, £11; that is, about £3,320 together. The excise taxes, however, were far higher—namely, for imported liquors, £9,500; home-made beer, etc., £37; home-made liquors, £569; licences, £1,569; fines, £52; duty for *growing* tobacco, 6*s.*, and for selling it, £269; and tobacco fines, £20. This shows an excise income from the province of £12,000, being a decrease on foreign liquors, compared with the previous year, of £4,600, and an increase on home-made liquors of £439; but an increase for licences of £150, and £15 for fines.

† The most frequent maladies were inflammation of the lungs, bowels,

The Siberians generally are said to be remarkably strong and robust, for which the reason has been suggested that all the weakly babies are killed by the climate. What truth there may be in this I know not, but in a table given me by the priest of Vladivostock, showing at what ages had occurred the 102 deaths in his parish, for 1878, it was seen that 58, or more than one-half, died under five years of age; and of these, 37 attained to less than the age of 12 months. Further, 24 died between the ages of 25 and 40, and only four exceeded the age of 50.

The report went on to speak of the civil affairs of the province, its public institutions and communications, the morality of the people and their religious dissensions, the prisons* and statistics concerning

and womb, and heart disease. Under the head of epidemics it seemed that during the year typhoid fever broke out at Nikolaefsk and carried off 21 men. A like visitation, lasting for 18 days, in the Khanka district caused about the same number of deaths. At Sophiisk and Udskoi 248 men were struck down, of whom, however, 244 recovered. The deaths by accident and suicide in the province amounted to 21, ten more than in the preceding year.

* Criminals and their crimes in the Sea-coast Province for five years, 1874—1878.

	1874.	1875.	1876.	1877.	1878.	Total. Male.	Fm.	Tot.
Sacrilege or ecclesiastical offences	...	1	2	...	...	3	...	3
Offences against the Government and insubordination to authorities	4	2	6	1	13	24	2	26
Breaking prison bounds, running away, and liberating others	9	8	38	43	13	109	2	111
Offences against excise laws	12	3	1	2	2	20	...	20
Offences against mercantile laws	...	4	4	5	...	11	2	13
Vagrancy, harbouring vagabonds, and offences against passport laws	13	10	80	22	38	157	6	163
Murder	3	8	14	7	12	37	7	44
Wounding and other kinds of violence	2	2	15	3	11	30	3	33
Personal insult and assault	10	2	5	8	12	35	2	37
Robbery	8	6	62	28	28	127	5	132
Rascality	3	3	11	6	16	36	3	39
Embezzlement and fraud	...	1	1	4	1	7	...	7
Forgery, or counterfeiting notes	...	...	...	...	8	7	1	8
Bigamy	...	...	...	...	5	3	2	5
Offences against marriage laws	...	...	...	...	2	1	1	2
Arson	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1
Totals	64	50	239	129	162	608	36	644

fire* and floods; but I need enlarge no further upon the Primorsk as a whole. It has been already pointed out that the country can be best described in three sections,—the Upper or Northern portion, the Lower or Southern portion, and the Middle Primorsk, corresponding roughly to the basin of the Lower Amur, to the description of which last I shall now proceed.

* The three fire-engine establishments, maintained at a cost of £534 per annum, are situated at Petropavlovsk, Nikolaefsk, and Vladivostock, their plant consisting of three steam and three manual engines, 26 horses, and 13 water-carts.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE LOWER AMUR.

My plans altered.—A serious alternative.—Khabarofka.—Fur trade.—Post-office and bank.—A Siberian garden.—Started for Nikolaefsk.—The Lower Amur.—Its affluents.—Fish.—A Russian advocate.—Goldi Christians.—Sophiisk.—A procureur.—Lake Kizi.—Mariinsk.—Snow mountains.—Mikhailofsky.—Hot springs of Mukhal.—Beautiful scenery.—Tyr monuments.—The "white village."—Mouth of the Amur.

APPROACHING Khabarofka on the evening of August 8th, I thought that my journeys on the Amur were ended. I had refused advice that I should go on to Nikolaefsk, my great object being to reach Vladivostock as quickly as possible, there embark for Japan, and thence proceed to America. As to how this could be accomplished no definite information was forthcoming. Something was said at Blagovestchensk about a steamer called the *Dragon*, and her periodical trips between China, Japan, Vladivostock, Sakhalin, and Nikolaefsk. Merchant ships also were reported to leave the Siberian ports from time to time, as also men-of-war, returning southwards after spending the summer months out of the heat of the tropics. My friends, therefore, at the telegraph station promised to inquire what ships were to leave Vladivostock, and I was to learn the reply on arriving at Khabarofka. A new factor, however, was added to my calculations by Baron Stackelberg, my fellow-passenger, who under-

stood that his friend, Professor Milne, was staying at Vladivostock. The Baron had telegraphed thither to his agent to inquire of the professor if he were "*plein de voyage*," and if so, whether he would proceed by sea to meet him at Nikolaefsk for a pleasure tour, and then accompany him to Kamchatka. The Baron expected to find a telegram at Khabarofka, and then, said he, "If Mr. Milne come by the *Dragon* to Nikolaefsk, it will be better for you to go there with me, and take the boat on its return to Sakhalin, Vladivostock, and Japan, or you may otherwise have to wait at Vladivostock until the *Dragon* returns."

Such were our thoughts as we approached Khabarofka, where, on arriving, I found, to my dismay, that the Ussuri boat had grown tired of waiting for us, and had gone, and that another would not start for three days.* No message awaited me at Khabarofka, and from the Baron's telegram it seemed that Mr. Milne was not at Vladivostock, but that the *Dragon* had just left, or was about to leave, for Nikolaefsk, to which port, however, there was no steamer proceeding from Khabarofka for several days. I was, therefore, in a dilemma. If I went south, I might have to wait a month for the *Dragon;* and if I stayed for the river steamer to Nikolaefsk, I might lose the *Dragon*, and thus go 1,250 miles out of my way. I fell asleep that night not knowing what to do, hoping that with morn-

* This was bad enough, but not all. There was no inn, post-house, or hotel in the place; the only lodging that offered was a room constructed on a floating barge, without beds or bedsteads, and in which might sleep, on the seats or the floor, Russians, Chinese, Manchu, or anyone else that chose. Here, however, my Finnish friend, M. Kruskopf, came to my aid, and volunteered to get me a bed at the telegraph station, an offer I should thankfully have accepted, but the captain of the *Zeya* consented to my sleeping on board till morning, when he expected to go back.

ing light the way might be clearer. On waking, I learned that the Baron had been to the agents and taken them to task because the steamer going north to Nikolaefsk had also not waited the arrival of our boat as announced. So successfully had he stormed, according to his own account, that the agent had ordered the *Zeya*, instead of going back, to go forward to Nikolaefsk.

At no previous point in my journey had I felt it so hard to decide what to do for the best. On leaving England, my tour had been planned to last three months, a period I had already exceeded, while more than half the globe remained to be traversed. I had, moreover, left in the hands of others editorial duties that called for my return, and now there seemed the possibility of prolonged delay. I looked up most earnestly for wisdom, and determined to be guided by the Baron's advice. Gloomy rumours had reached me of the sad condition of the Sakhalin prisoners, and I asked the Baron whether he thought it at all likely that if I went to the island, and afterwards sent a report to the authorities, it might tend to better the prisoners' condition. He first asked me gravely, though somewhat to my amusement, whether what I was doing was likely to bring the governments of our respective countries into collision, and then, on being assured that I was acting simply as a private individual, he told me that at Vladivostock I should get no information or statistics respecting Sakhalin, since the books were kept at Nikolaefsk, to which place, therefore, he recommended me to go. Accordingly, fortified with the hope of being useful, I decided to do this; but it was not without many misgivings, though out of that

decision sprang results for which afterwards I was deeply grateful. I did not find the *Dragon*, and had ultimately to retrace my steps to Khabarofka; but my going to Nikolaefsk led to the better distribution of more than 12,000 tracts and several Scriptures, and afforded me glimpses of heathen life for which I shall ever be thankful.

The boat was not to start till noon, and this gave me leisure to see something of our stopping-place. Khabarofka stands on a promontory, at the junction of the Amur with the Ussuri, and overlooks both streams from the top of the bluff, in which, in this direction, the Khoekhtsi hills, running at right angles from the coast, terminate. The position is well chosen for a military post, and the town is not without importance commercially. There are several stores, and the merchants trade with the aborigines of the north in furs to the value of £30,000 a year. Whilst calling on a merchant with whom I had travelled, there entered a Chinaman with what looked like a number of dried rabbit-skins hung on his arm. They proved to be sable-skins, almost as they come from the animals' backs, turned inside out. In this condition the natives barter them to the Chinese, who, in turn, sell them to the merchants, some of whom are agents for large firms in Petersburg and Moscow. On this occasion the Chinaman asked seven silver roubles, or a guinea, for each skin, which showed that they were not of high quality.*

* On returning to Khabarofka I found one of my fellow-passengers had bought eight skins, for which he had paid 50*s*. each, and for one for his wife's hat £4. I heard subsequently that the best sable-skins are from the neighbourhood of the Okhotsk sea, and are worth £4 each. My informant, an old sea captain, said that in 1857 he bought 2,000 in

Besides the stores in Khabarofka there is an establishment where they employ 50 men and build steamers, etc., to the value of £10,000 yearly. One of the principal agents of the Steamboat Company lives in the place, drawing a salary of £500 a year, which is thought there a handsome income; but he told me he could not remain, since there was no school near for the education of his children. On entering the post-office, there were to be seen in a large chest, bags, not to say sacks, full of silver roubles, the guardianship of which seemed fully to justify the presence of an armed Cossack, one of whose cloth is always found keeping watch in the post-office and over the mail-bags in transit. The post-office, in fact, is a quasi bank, for on arriving at Nikolaefsk I found that my host kept his banking account 6,000 miles distant, at Petersburg. He paid in his money at the local post-office, and then telegraphed to the capital, upon which his bankers gave him credit for the deposit. There are State banks in Siberia, at Tomsk, Krasnoiarsk, and Irkutsk; but, from the narrow escape I had at Tomsk of being delayed in getting my cash, I was thankful for having exchanged my money in Petersburg for a number of hundred-rouble notes, which I carried in a pocket-girdle.*

Kamcnatka at 30*s.*, and that they commanded in New York from £5 to £6 each. Among them were 22 skins for a lady's set of trimmings, which, when made up, cost her £200. The skins of the younger sables, he said, were blacker than those of the older, which are apt to be more or less grey. The former sell better in Berlin, and the latter are highly esteemed in Paris.

* Besides these hundred-rouble notes I took, to pay for horses, £30 in one-rouble notes, the same amount in three and five-rouble notes, small silver coin to the value of 100 roubles, and a bag of copper kopecks, for at the post-houses they are not bound to give change, and the clerks gladly pocket the difference when smaller money is not forthcoming. In

At Khabarofka I visited the garden of one of the merchants, said to be the best in the place. It was 10 years old, full of apple and pear trees, but they were wild ones, transplanted eight years before. None of the apples were so large as a good English crab, and the "Bergamot" pears were as small. The latter tasted something like the quince, and were useless except to preserve for eating with roast meat. Among other trees were the walnut, the acacia, the bird-cherry, a thorn with a berry larger than is commonly seen in England, called *résan;* the *boyarka* or service tree, with bunches of berries like grapes (called *calina*), and the beech. Among the shrubs, plants, and flowers were maize, wild white lilac, raspberries, currants, and strawberries, dahlias, verbenas, wild pæonies, stocks, carnations, and pinks; and among climbers the wild pea, and the Siberian vinegar plant. These, with other flowers, of which I did not know the names, made a fair show for Khabarofka, where the cold winds begin in the middle of September, and snow covers the ground from November to March. In the neighbourhood were abundance of trees common to a temperate region, such as the oak, maple, alder, larch, pine, poplar, willow, and lime. Some prettily overhung the river's bank, which was enlivened with boats drawn up by Manchu and Chinese, some of whom were selling excellent French beans, whilst others were engaged in making and mending shoes.

the peopled parts of the Sea-coast government there is a postal delivery once a week, at Okhotsk once a month, and at one happy place in the far north, I was told, the postman arrives but once a year! They have a "parcel post" in Siberia, by which packets must not exceed £500 in value, nor weigh more than 1 cwt. The rates are, for 200 miles, ¾*d.* per Russian pound, and ½*d.* per pound extra for every 60 miles up to 1,600. Beyond that distance it costs ½*d.* per pound for every 160 miles.

Having thus made the most of my time at Khabarofka I once more boarded the *Zeya*, on Saturday noon, for a voyage of 626 miles to Nikolaefsk, in the course of which we were to pass, though not necessarily to stop at, 52 stations. Some were native villages, the names of which had been adopted by the Russians; others were Russian settlements with Sclavonic names; whilst other stations bore double titles, both Russian and native.

The basin of the Lower Amur is bounded on the west by the Bureya mountains, between which and the river lies a flat and partially swampy country; whilst on the east its limit is the coast range already referred to as the Sikhota Alin. The course of the river is north-east. Its principal tributaries flowing in on the left or western bank are the Kur, Girin, and Amgun; on the right bank, the Dondon and the Khungar. The largest of these on the left bank is the Amgun; the largest on the right is the Dondon, which is 500 yards wide at its mouth. At Khabarofka, the Amur has a width of 900 yards; and as we steamed away, the right bank stood out in contrast to the left, which was flat; but after proceeding 20 miles, the character of the scenery changed. Both banks became flat, islands were numerous, and the stream widened to five miles. This kind of scenery continued for the rest of the day, and our evening progress was highly enjoyable, varied now and then by the appearance of the summer yourts of the natives, or the lonely post-stations, deserted in summer, where horses are kept in winter, when the river is frozen and transformed into a road. At the confluence of the Dondon, the river has soundings up to 37 feet, and the channel measures three miles in breadth. This is the

ridest part of the river without intervening islands, hough 17 miles lower, where the left bank is marshy nd dotted with lakes, the entire width extends to 12 niles.*

At Viatskoy, 50 miles from Khabarofka, I stayed on ny return journey, and was offered a sturgeon a yard ong, which a man had caught, and was keeping in the iver tied by a string beneath the gills. Of the fish aught on the Lower Amur, the Russians think very ighly of the sterlet, and the sturgeon is costly. For his small specimen at Viatskoy was asked 2*s.* 6*d.*, ut in Moscow they said it would fetch £1. They ometimes catch sturgeon weighing from 200 to 300 lbs., nd the dried bones and cleansed gelatinous entrails of this fish form a prominent article of commerce between the natives and the Manchu. The bones cost in Manchuria, for culinary purposes, nearly 4*s.* per lb., and the gelatine in Moscow 7*s.* per lb.

In latitude 50° N., the Amur receives on the left bank, from Lake Bolan, an affluent 900 yards wide and 30 feet deep. Hills now rise on both banks, and at Perm (or Milku) the depth of the river increases to between 50 and 60 feet. At Tambofsk, 280 miles from Khabarofka, the banks become mountainous on either side, the river contracts to an average width of a mile and a third, and soundings often reach to 90 feet; and thus the river continues, for a distance of 60 miles, to Zherebtsofsk. From Zherebtsofsk to Sophiisk, the

* Mr. Ravenstein, in his admirable and generally accurate work (page 187), gives the Amur below the Dondon a breadth in one bed of six miles, and further on a width of 15 miles, including the islands; but I have been unable to confirm these figures from either the chart of the captain of the steamer, or from a well-executed Russian survey of the Amur river at the India Office, which was politely shown me by Mr. Trelawney Saunders.

scenery changes again, the river enlarges, runs between numerous islands and several sandbanks, and at Sophiisk its depth is nearly 50 feet.

Our company on board was small in number, which was to be expected, seeing that the boat was a "special." In the first-class there were only three persons besides the Baron and myself, namely, M. Kruskopf, the telegraph inspector, an advocate, and with him a young man dressed like a Russian shopkeeper. The last two I had observed among the second-class passengers from Kara. We were now brought into closer contact. The advocate spoke French, and I gathered from him that the young man was his client, whose father had recently died, leaving him £20,000. They were come from Central Russia to realize the money, for which the advocate, since he would be occupied at least all the summer, was to have the modest fee of £3,000.*

On the morning after leaving Khabarofka, M. Kruskopf left the boat to visit the station at Troitzkoy, but he did not forget me; for, unasked, he telegraphed to Nikolaefsk to his friends, told them I was coming, and requested them to look after my welfare. The day was Sunday, and I enjoyed a quiet morning in my cabin; and in the afternoon we had steamed 170 miles

* After this I thought the profession of an advocate profitable, and readily believed him when he told me that he possessed in Russia on the Volga nearly 8,000 acres of land, which cost about £1 an acre. It was the best land, he said, in all Russia; 600 acres he used for growing wheat, and the rest for rye, selling his corn to the merchants of Samara. He told me that in forensic matters things are reversed as between Russia and England, that whereas in England a barrister looks forward to being a judge, in Russia a judge (who is paid only £300 to £400 a year) looks forward to being an advocate, which he can become only after spending five years in court.

—to Malmejskoy. Here we saw on the bank some Goldi, who called to my mind pictures I had seen of North American Indians. Some of them had a cross suspended from the neck, which in their case had a meaning; for those who wore it thus were baptized, and so distinguished from the pagan Goldi. I gave a few tracts among these people, and in return received, in one of the villages, a curious salutation. Offering an illuminated text to a little girl, her mother directed her to express her thanks by crossing her hands with the palms uppermost, and then go down on all-fours at my feet with her head to the ground.

At Tambofsk, or Girin, 280 miles further, was a village where, on the return journey in the beginning of September, I bought melons and ripe black currants, the latter good, but with less taste than those grown in England. Other berries, tart but juicy, were offered for sale. Here, too, were lying on the bank some drunken gold-miners, whom the captain refused to take on board in that condition, leaving them till he should call again three weeks later, by which time possibly they might be sober and wiser. I met gold capitalists both at Nikolaefsk and at Vladivostock; but from the report sent to the Emperor concerning the Primorsk, it appeared that in 1878 only 600 lbs. of gold were washed throughout the province, the small quantity being set down to the lack of workmen. At Tambofsk we passed out of the district inhabited by the Goldi, and entered that of a distinct though somewhat similar tribe, called the Gilyaks, of both of whom I shall speak hereafter.

The next place of note to which we came, 412 miles from Khabarofka, was Sofiisk, from which there is a

road 33 miles long by the shore of Kizi Lake to the coast at De Castries Bay. Light draught steamboats can go within 12 miles or less of De Castries; and as the navigation of the mouth of the Amur is difficult, it was at one time proposed to make a canal, or a railway, to connect the lake with the sea. Surveys were made by Mr. Romanoff, but the plan is not likely to be carried out. The steamer passed Sofiisk on my first journey, but in returning we stayed for a couple of hours; and as there was a prison in the place, I presented my letters, and requested to be allowed to see it. Also I gave to the Commandant of the 5th East Siberian battalion, Colonel Ussofovitch, who was stationed there, a box of books and tracts, with a letter in French, asking that they might be distributed among his soldiers. The colonel did not know French, and a young officer, who called himself the "procureur" of the battalion, was called in to interpret. What this gentleman's precise office was, I could not exactly make out, but it seemed to be something between that of a judge and a military head police-master. He took me to see the building, where, to my surprise, were 150 prisoners, many of whom, however, were on their way to Sakhalin. The wooden planking of the footways in the town was miserably out of order, and I hinted to the procureur that since they had insufficient work for the prisoners, it would be well to employ them in repairing the pavements. This idea seemed never to have struck him, and he replied at once that he would consider the matter. The procureur spoke French fluently, though with a Russian accent, and he knew something also of the dead languages, Hebrew among them. He said that he had studied this language

in prospect of becoming a priest; but that, when he could not see his way to £200 a year in the church, he had entered the army, which, he said, "paid" better. In this case, it seemed to me, the Russian Church, by reason of its miserable emoluments, had lost to her clergy a youth of greater intellectual culture than the majority of her priests. The population of Sofiisk was given me as 700 military and 300 civilians, amongst whom I found a ready sale for the Scriptures. At the telegraph office complaints reached me, as at Khabarofka, that they had no means of educating their children, there being no local school.

The Amur at Sofiisk is nearly two miles wide; seven miles lower it expands to upwards of four miles. Thirteen miles beyond, the banks are low, flat, and marshy; but the land is good, and is cultivated by Russian settlers. Here, too, is the town of Mariinsk, the oldest Russian settlement, next to Nikolaefsk, on the Lower Amur, and situated on the right bank of the river, at the entrance to the Kizi Lake.*

Mariinsk was founded by the Russian-American company in the same year with Nikolaefsk, and was a trading post until the military occupation of the river. Difficulties of navigation diminished its military importance, and the post was transferred to Sofiisk, founded in 1858. On an island opposite Mariinsk is

* This lake seems to be an overflow from the river, which here divides into several channels, and looks as if one day in the remote past it would fain have ended its wanderings, and turned off eastwards through the sea-coast range into Castries Bay. The distance from the head of the Kizi Lake to Castries Bay is only 8½ miles. The lake occupies an area of 93 square miles, being 25 miles long and 12 broad. Of the two islets in the lake, one is a rock about 50 feet in diameter. The crevices are full of fox-holes, and the Gilyaks regard it as sacred, assembling there from time to time for their Shaman rites.

in print. This lady seems to have inherited something of her father's enterprise, for I have heard recently from a friend that he met her travelling in Western Siberia.

Mr. Collins mentions that from Mariinsk is seen, to the south-west, a very high mountain, with much snow upon it; and Mr. Ravenstein observes that a few miles below Tambofsk, or Girin, may be seen the craggy summits of mountain ranges, at greater or less distance from the river, covered, in places, as late as June with snow. It was after June when I passed down the stream, but I saw mountains to the left with what looked like snow-drifts, or corries filled with snow. My fellow-passengers, however, and especially the Baron, stoutly maintained that I was mistaken, and that what we saw was either chalk or an effect of light. The formation of the rocks on some of the mountain crests was very remarkable, and they were arrayed in such straight lines, here and there, that they looked like the building of Titans rather than Nature's handiwork.

Passing Mariinsk we reached Mikhailofsky, a distance of 526 miles from Khabarofka, on Monday afternoon,—that is to say, in about 48 hours, which was more rapid travelling than the captain had accomplished on the Shilka and Upper Amur. A merchant afterwards whispered to me, however, that it was reckless navigation. The captain had not made the passage before; so, placing a man in the bows with the measuring-rod, and rising above all questions as to where the channel lay, he just shot ahead, suspecting no ill where no ill seemed. Fortunately we ran on neither rocks nor shoals, but I was exhorted

to be thankful that we had not come to grief. Had we been allowed to proceed at this rate we should have reached Nikolaefsk in another 24 hours, but a telegram awaited the captain at Mikhailofsky to say that another boat of the company was coming up from Nikolaefsk, for which he was to wait, then exchange cargoes and passengers, and return. This involved a delay of 30 hours, which gave me an opportunity of visiting a settlers' village, the priest of which informed me that he had in his parish 400 persons, of whom only 15 could read. The forest in the neighbourhood has been cleared, and rye, barley, and oats are successfully cultivated. So, too, are vegetables on the river's bank, for the market at Nikolaefsk. Cucumbers were just coming in, and the people were eating them like apples. When the Baron and I made a morning call at one of the houses, they simply brought forth cucumbers and salt wherewith to regale us. I saw, too, in this village a curious specimen of Russian economy. Not able to purchase whole panes of window-glass, the peasants had used fragments of any form they could get, and fixed them with pieces of birch bark, cut to the shape. Mikhailofsky, however, was not a flourishing village, and it must be added that the colonies of the Lower Amur are generally the least prosperous in the country.

Late on Tuesday evening the promised steamship *Onon* arrived, and I left the *Zeya*, in which I had spent the previous 16 days, and travelled 1,900 miles. Next morning we arrived at a Gilyak village, called Mukhal, near to some hot springs which are said to be beneficial in cases of rheumatism, syphilis, diarrhœa, and goitre. The Polish exile, in whose charge they

ıre, is allowed their monopoly, and the Government ɡives him a grant of £50 a year. About mid-day we ɔassed another Gilyak village called Tyr. The Amur ıere contracts to 900 yards, and from a bold cliff, ıoo feet high on the right bank, a fine view is obtained ıp stream. The river's banks spread to a width of ive miles, and well-wooded islands lie between. To :he south are dark forests and mountain ridges, and ıt the back of the cliff is a tableland several miles broad. On the opposite bank enters the river Amgun, which rises in the Bureya mountains, and, after a course of not less than 700 miles, flows into the Amur through a delta covered with forest.

The cliff at Tyr is interesting to the archæologist by reason of its Tatar monuments with inscriptions, the history of which appears somewhat doubtful.*

I went ashore to examine these monuments, of which

* Réclus quotes Von Middendorf to the effect that on the map of Remezov, which appeared in the seventeenth century, a town is marked on this spot as the limits of the conquests of the Tsar Alexander of Macedon, who hid his arms and left there a bell. Such was the tradition of the Cossacks. Again, Ravenstein quotes Witsen to the effect that Russian warriors, 30 or 40 years ago, found a bell weighing 660 lbs. at a place which seems to have been dug round, and near which stood several stones bearing Chinese inscriptions; and he adds that a manuscript of 1678, in the library of the Siberian department, mentions the same facts. My fellow-passengers spoke of the monuments as dating back to the time of Ghengis Khan, and erected to mark the limit of his conquests. Once more, Mr. Ravenstein asserts that one of the emperors of the Yuen dynasty (which flourished in China from 1234 to 1368, A.D.) went by sea to the mouth of the Amur, in commemoration of which he built at Tyr the monastery of "Eternal Repose." To come to our own times, Mr. Collins relates that the inscriptions on the monuments were translated by the Archimandrite Avvakum, who for several years was connected with the Russian Mission at Peking, and who descended the Amur about 1857 as interpreter to Count Putiatin's embassy, then on its way to China. Mr. Collins obtained from an officer a translation from the Russian into English of the Archimandrite's interpretation.

Mr. Ravenstein mentions four—one with a granite base and the upper portion of grey, fine-grained marble, and another of porphyry resting on an octagonal pedestal. Unfortunately, I could stay only a very short time, as the steamer did not wait. I found two monuments near the edge of the cliff, with characters cut thereon. A third is about 400 yards to the east, on a more elevated point, and on a bare rock foundation. The principal one, which I examined most, resembles a thick upright tombstone, about five feet high. The Archimandrite Avvakum says everything proves that the spot where the monument is standing was once the site of a temple devoted to the worship of Buddha, and in Chinese language was called "*Youn-nen-se*"—that is, the "Temple of Eternal Repose." The two inscriptions on either side—one in Chinese and the other in Mongolian—were written, he thinks, by some illiterate Mongol lama, not thoroughly acquainted with Chinese grammar. On the left-hand side are the Sanscrit words, "*Om-mani-badme-houm*," in Thibetan letters; and beneath, in Chinese, "*Dai Yuan shouch hi-li-gun-bu*"—that is, "The great Yuan spreads the hands of force everywhere." In a second line on the same side the words, "*Om-mani-badme-houm*" are written in Chinese and Nigurian. The inscriptions on the right side contain the same in Chinese, Thibetan, and Nigurian. "And then," says the Archimandrite, "there is nothing more"; about which statement, however, with all deference, I venture to express my doubts; for although I do not read Chinese, and could only examine the monuments for a very few moments, yet I came to the conclusion that whether the interpretation first given be correct or not, it is inadequate, and far

from exhaustive. I saw clearly on the stone some large Chinese characters, perhaps two inches high, and some of the Chinese passengers were able partially to decipher them; but the general appearance of the stone reminded me of a palimpsest manuscript which had been, in the first place, covered with small characters, about half an inch square or less, over which the larger characters had been written. Beside the monumental stone, which was mounted on a pedestal, there were lying near five flat stones, cut across the centres from side to side with transverse grooves, about an inch wide and deep. Mr. Collins says they are supposed to have been altars of sacrifice, once elevated and within the temple, and that the grooves served to conduct the blood of the victim into the proper vessel. Whether this be so or not I cannot say, but they looked to me much more like the capitals or bases of pillars, with the grooves for keeping them in place.* It is much to be wished that the spot should be visited, and the monuments examined by a competent scholar.

Towards evening we passed another Gilyak habitation called the "white village," and afterwards found the banks of the Amur becoming abrupt, the islands low and to a great extent exposed to inundation. We had long been passing out of the region of foliferous trees, and in approaching Nikolaefsk they were almost entirely supplanted by conifers, fir-trees prevailing,

* Mr. Collins speaks of excavations, or pits, within and without the remains of a wall, and mentions also his finding the monuments decorated with wreathed garlands of finely-worked splint, or the stripping of a tree, bound together at intervals with willow twigs. The bases of the monuments also were dressed with shavings of wood, worked to represent flowers, thickly planted around in the earth. These he conjectured to have been, as they probably were, offerings of the natives, who still use the place, I understood, for Shamanistic practices.

birches and some few other leafy trees occurring only in favoured localities. The Amur at Nikolaefsk reaches in some places to a depth of 15 feet, is a mile and three-quarters wide, with a current of from four to five knots. The river enters the sea at a distance of 26 miles from the town, the Liman, or gulf, measuring more than nine miles at its widest.*

Thus, on Tuesday evening, the 13th of August, I arrived at Nikolaefsk, having completed the passage of the Lower Amur. I have said almost nothing, however, of its curious heathen inhabitants, whose acquaintance I am so glad to have made, and to whose description I shall now proceed.

* A mile below the town there are sandbanks, and a bar which prevents the entrance of ships drawing more than 13 feet of water. In fact, from the Continent to the Island of Sakhalin are sandbanks, among which wind the navigable channels, which are liable to change during heavy tempests, so that the pilots are obliged to trace them, sounding-rod in hand. I heard, too, that for strategic purposes some of these channels at the mouth of the river could be filled up, or diverted.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE GILYAKS.

The Gilyaks, thorough heathens.—Their habitat and number.—Form, diseases, generation, and character.—Habitations.—Living on fish.—Winter and summer clothing.—Methods of fishing.—Dirty habits.—Domestic animals.—Boats.—Marriage customs.—Price of a wife.—Foreign relations.—Manchu merchants.—Conversation with Gilyaks.—Gilyak and Goldi languages.—Education.—Superstitions.—Idols and charms.—Method of bear-catching and killing.—Alleged worship of the bear.—Shaman rites.—Gilyak treatment of the dead.—Romanist mission to the Gilyaks.—Martyrdom of the missionary.

THE Gilyaks were the most thorough heathens I saw in Siberia.* I visited two of their villages—Mukhul and Tyr—saw some of them at Nikolaefsk almost daily, and met a former starosta of the "white" village. I conversed also with an American and an Englishman who had known them for many years; with a French trader among them; with a telegraph engineer whose business took him through the Gilyak country and into their houses; and, further, with three Russian priests, who as missionaries labour among

* Their name is variously spelt Gee-laks, Giliaks, Ghiliaks, and Gilyaks. Living near and resembling in many points the Goldi, the two tribes, for ethnographical purposes, are sometimes classed together as branches of the Tunguse family. But M. Réclus is right when, speaking of the "Giliaks" or "Kilé," he calls them "frères de ceux qui vivent dans l'île de Sakhalin et parents de ces mystérieux Aïnos qui sont l'objet de tant de discussion entre les ethnologistes"; and Mr. Howorth says that the Ghiliaks, called "Fish-skin Tata" by the Chinese, are no doubt sophisticated Aïnos, while the Goldi are Tunguses.

them and the Goldi. From all of these I gathered more or less information, which has since been supplemented by reading; yet it must be owned that, as to all save what meets the eye, we are still very little informed in regard to this people; whilst of their religion (if they have any) next to nothing is known. Few Russians learn the Gilyak language, and few Gilyaks learn Russ.

The Gilyak country extends from Tambofsk (or Girin), about 350 miles south of Nikolaefsk, to the sea-shore near the mouth of the Amur, as well as over the northern half of the island of Sakhalin. The subdivisions of the people on the island are, on the west coast the Smerenkur, and on the east the Tro. To state accurately their numbers is not easy. When I asked a former starosta of the white village what was its population, he replied, "We have 60 men and more women, but the children are not counted." Mr. Collins passed on the Amur 39 Gilyak villages, the population of which he estimated at 1,680.

In stature these aborigines are diminutive, usually below rather than above five feet; their eyes are elongated; the color of the skin tawny, like that of the Chinese; the hair black, and not luxuriant.* The Gilyaks tie up the hair in a thick tail, but do not, like the Manchu and Goldi, shave or cut it; hence they were called by the Chinese "long hairs."

They do not cause malformations of body by pres-

* As Réclus observes, they have not the open and clear physiognomy of the majority of the Tunguses, and their little eyes sparkle with a dull brilliance; they have squat noses, thick lips, prominent cheekbones, and, he adds, "thick beards"; which last I can hardly confirm, but would rather say, with Mr. Ravenstein, that the beard is stronger with them than with the Tunguses, which is not saying much.

sure, mutilation, or incision. Their diseases, in common with the Goldi, are rheumatism, ophthalmia (produced by hunting in the snow), and syphilis, the last having been originally introduced by Manchu merchants. In hereditary cases it is no doubt aggravated by their filthy manner of living. The Gilyaks resort for cure to the hot springs at Mukhul; but the Goldi, having no such springs, frequently die of the disease. Insanity is rare among them. Their women have few children; six is thought a very large family. They strap their babies in wooden cradles very much like a butcher's tray, and suspend them from the roof, as I saw at Mukhul, where the poor little creature was unable to move hand or foot. I gathered from a Russian missionary that the Goldi are thought to be slightly on the increase; but the Gilyaks, from the time the Russians first knew them, have been dying out.*

The winter habitations of the Gilyaks and Goldi are erected in clusters of from two or three to perhaps a dozen. In the 39 villages mentioned by Collins he counted 140 houses. The first Gilyak dwelling I entered was at Mukhul. It was about 40 feet square, built of small posts or stakes, and plastered with mud. The roof was supported by heavier posts at the corners, with cross-pieces on which the rafters rested, and upright timbers supported the covering of larch bark, kept in its place and from warping in the sun

* Dwelling further from the Manchu than the Amur Tunguses, they are wilder; and Réclus observes that they have a greater idea of liberty, acknowledge no master, and are governed only by custom, which regulates their festivals, and determines their hunting and fishing affairs, their marriages and burials. They are certainly courageous in the way they catch and kill the bear, though oddly enough they never willingly get into water, and do not swim.

by stones and heavy poles. Among the cross-beams and joists were nets, skins, dog-sledges, light canoes, hunting implements, fish-baskets of birch or willow twigs, dried fish, herbs, and, in fact, the wealth and working tools of the half-dozen families to whom the house was evidently a comfortable home during a long and severe winter. Around three sides of the interior was a raised divan for a seat and dining and sleeping place, with a flue running underneath, and a fireplace at either end. At the vacant side of the interior were cooking utensils, pots, kettles, knives, and wooden pans; and there were hung to dry various skins and fish, entrails, etc. The house had only this one room, and in the centre was a raised platform, under which in winter are tied the dogs, and sometimes the family bear. The windows were of fish-skin, or thin paper, over a lattice. Besides this kind of dwelling-house for winter, I entered at Tyr a thatched log building, supported and raised on posts several feet above the ground, and out of the reach of floods, dogs, and vermin. The verandah was approached by climbing a notched log. The floor consisted of poles, between which daylight was visible; and in the centre was a box full of earth for the fireplace. The building was used probably in winter for a storehouse; but I found it inhabited as a summer residence. The most prominent objects, both indoors and out, were large racks and poles, on which fish were hung to dry; and the combined odour of fish and fish-oil made it little short of an act of heroism to stay long in a Gilyak's house.

These people do not cultivate the land, but subsist almost entirely on fish. Occasionally they eat the animals taken in the chase, and their dogs, when they

e ; while pork and other flesh, with a little millet, are served for festivals.*

The favourite winter dress of both Gilyaks and Goldi is made of dogs' skins, or of fox or wolf, as being the next warmest. In summer they wear fish-skin, hence the Chinese called them "Yupitatze," or "fish-skin strangers," though the well-to-do among the Goldi get from the merchants cotton goods, and sometimes even silk. The fish-skin is prepared from two kinds of salmon. They strip it off with great dexterity, and, by beating with a mallet, remove the scales, and so render it supple. Clothes thus made are waterproof. I saw a travelling bag, and even the sail of a boat, made of this material. I had hoped, when leaving Kara, to have found at Ignashina the dress of a Tunguse shaman, but I was disappointed. I succeeded, however, in purchasing at Tyr a fish-skin coat. It is handsomely embroidered, and colored on the back.† The Gilyak hats are made of fur for the

* They are beginning now to use tea, salt, sugar, and bread ; but all of these seem to have been unknown to them before the advent of the Russians. I heard it mentioned, as a good trait in their character, that if a Gilyak receives a piece of bread, after eating a portion he takes home the remainder as a treat for his family. During my stay at Mikhailofsky the natives came to barter wild fruit for bread. They are said to have no stated hours for meals, and knives and forks are of course unknown to them. Noticing one day some Manchu and Goldi at a meal, I observed they had boiled millet in basins, which they raised to the lips, and then whipped the millet into their mouths with chop-sticks.

† The men and women dress very much alike. A number of small metal pendants about the size of a sixpence round the bottom of the blouse distinguishes the gentler sex. I purchased, too, at Mukhul some pieces of embroidery on fish-skin, the workmanship of which is thought good in England ; whilst at Tyr was given me a kind of fish-skin open work or lace. The blouse of the men is fastened in front, and confined round the waist by a belt, to which is suspended a number of articles of daily use. They consist of a large knife, a Chinese pipe, an iron instru-

winter with lappets; and the Goldi, by sewing together squirrels' tails, make a round fur like a "boa," about five inches in diameter, which, being joined at the ends, serves either for the neck or to encircle the head like a coronet. Their summer hat, of depressed conical shape, is made of birch-tree bark, ornamented on the top by strips of colored wood sewn in patterns. It

SALMON-SKIN COAT AND BIRCH-BARK HAT.

has inside a wooden ridge, and is kept in place by a string under the chin.

The occupations of the Gilyaks and Goldi are fishing and hunting. They use *gill*-nets and seines in some localities, and *scoop*-nets in others. I more than once saw a fence of poles built at right angles to the shore,

ment for cleaning it, steel for striking a light, a bone for smoothing fish-skins and loosening knots, a bag of fish-skin for tinder, and a tobacco pouch, a specimen of which last, somewhat tastefully made of sturgeon's skin, was given me at Nikolaefsk by the chief civil authority.

extending 20 or 30 yards into the Amur. This fence is fish-proof, except in a few places where holes are purposely left for the salmon, which the natives lie in wait to catch with spears or hand-nets. When the fish are running well, a canoe can soon be filled.* Ropes and nets they make from hemp and from the common stinging-nettle, the stalks of which are treated like flax. This latter material is preferred, and makes cordage equal to that of civilized manufacture, though sometimes not quite so smooth. I obtained a specimen of very fine sewing-thread of native manufacture, and exceedingly strong; but colored threads for embroidery are purchased from the Russians or the Manchu.

The habits of the Gilyaks are dirty beyond description. They are said never to wash. A telegraphic engineer told me that he one day gave a Gilyak a piece of soap, which he put in his mouth, and, after chewing it to a lather, pronounced "very good." Both Gilyaks and Goldi have a liking, reverence, or fear for animals. They formerly domesticated ermines for catching rats, the high price of cats confining their possession to the wealthy. On the Lower Amur they find, besides those mentioned elsewhere, the elk, roe-buck, reindeer, and fox; the racoon-dog, wild boar, and lynx; the polecat, hedgehog, ermine, sable, and striped squirrel.† They are fond also of seeing swallows

* In places I saw square pens of wicker-work fixed, to enclose the fish after they pass the holes in the fence. For catching sturgeon they use a circular net, of 5-feet diameter, and shaped like a shallow bag. One part of the mouth is fitted with corks, and the opposite with weights of lead or iron. Two canoes in mid-stream hold this net vertically between them across the current. The sturgeon descending the river enter the trap, and the fishermen divide the "net proceeds."

† "Cats," says Mr. Knox, "have a half-religious character, and are treated with great respect. Since the advent of the Russians, the supply

build in their houses, and to induce them to do so they fasten small boards under the roof, by which these birds have access to the house. The Goldi keep the horned owl (for catching rats), the jay, the hawk, and the kite—the last for no particular use, unless it be for the sake of their feathers for arrows.* The eagle is sometimes seen fastened near their houses, and so are the dogs, which, in winter, are their principal means of locomotion. I saw a large number of them at Mukhul. A team may consist of any odd number from 7 to 17, a good leader being worth 50*s.* and an ordinary dog from 8*s.* to 10*s.* The sledge is made of thin boards five or six feet long, and 18 inches wide, convex below, but straight on the upper edge. A team of nine dogs draws a man and 200 pounds of luggage an entire day, each dog receiving a piece of fish a foot long, and about two inches square, the same in size as suffices for his master. The mode of summer communication is by boats made of pitch-fir or cedar. Besides these the Goldi make canoes of birch-bark. The native sits in the centre, and propels himself with

is very good. Before they came, the Manchu merchants used to bring only male cats, and those mutilated. The price was sometimes a hundred roubles for a single mouser, and by curtailing the supply, the Manchu kept up the market.

* The birds known to them belong generally to the species found in the same latitudes of Europe and America, but there are some birds of passage that are natives of Southern Asia, Japan, the Philippine Islands, and even South Africa and Australia. Seven-tenths of the birds of the Amur are found in Europe, two-tenths in Siberia, and one-tenth in regions further south. Some birds belong more properly to America, such as the Canadian woodcock and the water-ouzel, and there are several birds common to the east and west coasts of the Pacific. The number of stationary birds is not great. Maack enumerates 39 species that dwell here the entire year. The birds of passage generally arrive in April or May, and leave in September or October. It is a curious fact that they come later to Nikolaefsk than to the town of Yakutsk, nine degrees further north. This is due to difference of climate.

a double-bladed paddle. The canoes are flat-bottomed, and very easily upset. When a native sitting in one of them spears a fish, he moves only his arm, and keeps his body motionless. The larger boats are usually rowed by women, the lords of creation sitting in the stern to steer and smoke their long-stemmed, amber-tipped, Chinese pipes. There is one marked difference, however, between the rowing of the Gilyaks and Goldi, for whereas the latter, taking two oars, pull them together, the former pull them alternately—a seemingly clumsy way, but in practice efficient.

Women occupy a low position among the Gilyaks and Goldi, who are polygamists. Mr. Ravenstein quotes a statement of Rinso, a Japanese traveller, that among the Smerenkur Gilyaks polyandry prevails. Betrothal dates from childhood. The father chooses the bride for his infant son, a rich Gold paying from £5 to £20 for a girl five years old. At Mukhul the price of a wife was given me as from £10 to £50, often paid in silk stuffs and other materials, whilst a telegraph engineer named as the selling price for a Gilyak bride, from eight to ten dogs, a sledge, and two cases of brandy, though, if she have "a good nose," she fetches rather more. The bride elect is brought into the house of her future father-in-law, and when the girl is 12 or 13, and the boy 18, they are married.* Should a Gold who has many wives desire to be baptized the Russian missionaries compel him to elect one, and be

* Weddings, however, are expensive, for all the relatives expect to be invited, and they sometimes drink several gallons of Chinese *khanshin*. The drinking of this, I am told, causes not only intoxication, but among these people violence akin to madness. It is sold by weight, and costs tenpence per Russian pound, but its importation is strictly forbidden by Russian law.

canonically married to the object of his choice; the rest being sold, or, by a happy arrangement, returned to their respective fathers at half price. Notwithstanding such matrimonial drawbacks, I heard that among these interesting people there are no unmarried ladies.

The amusements of the Gilyaks are of the nature of gymnastics, such as throwing heavy irons and fencing. They begin early to shoot with bow and arrow, and are good archers. Their foreign relationships are of a very limited character.*

There was formerly at Pul an annual fair, which lasted for 10 days, and was like that of Nijni Novgorod in miniature.† The navigation of the Amur by the Russians has caused this fair to be discontinued, but the Manchu merchants still descend the river, though not in such numbers as formerly, when one voyage sufficed to realize enough for the wants of a

* Before the Russian occupation the Manchu came down the river to collect tribute and dispose of their merchandise. These Mandarins are charged with abuse of power, and with having made extortionate demands upon the natives, who hailed the Russians as their liberators. On the other hand, the Mandarin was supposed to make a small present of tobacco or silk to every one paying him tribute; and among the Gilyaks this present appeared to be reckoned of greater value than the tribute demanded. The Gilyaks, however, living so far off from the Manchu, do not seem to have been much oppressed by them, nor indeed to have been very frequently visited. Sakhalin was visited still less often, but I heard among the Goldi that they decidedly preferred the Russian to the Manchu rule.

† Manchu and Chinese merchants met Japanese from Sakhalin, Tunguses from the Okhotsk coast, and from the head waters of the Zeya and Amgun. Besides these were the Orochi, or Orochons, from the mountains east of the Lower Amur, and Manguns; to say nothing of smaller tribes, speaking nearly a dozen languages, and conducting business in a jargon of all the dialects. The goods imported were coarsely printed calicoes, Chinese silk materials, rice and millet, also bracelets, earrings, tobacco and brandy, cloth, powder, lead, and knives. These were exchanged for furs, isinglass, and the dried backbones of the sturgeon—the last being highly prized in Chinese cookery.

year. I was informed that they fleece the natives sadly, giving the Gilyaks, for instance, a pint of millet or half a pint of brandy for a sable-skin; and when the natives are made drunk, then, of course, skins are bartered for very much less. The Russian barges, fitted like floating stores, and towed on the river, must have interfered greatly with the Manchu traders, whose sway, it is to be hoped, is nearly at an end. The Gilyaks now come to the Russian towns, especially to Nikolaefsk, and not only sell their fish, but begin to purchase Russian articles; whereas, for a long time, they gave the preference to goods of Chinese make.

I met a family of Gilyaks in a shop at Nikolaefsk, with whom I endeavoured to exchange ideas, through one who spoke a little Russian, and I thought they seemed a people the lowest in intellect of any I had met. The company consisted of a father, mother, two daughters, and a deaf and dumb boy. The man did not know his daughters' age, nor even his own, saying that they kept no account. When asked whether he would sell me his daughter to wife, he replied at first that they did not sell their girls to Russians, not approving the alliance. When pressed further, however, he said that she was already sold (she was about 10 years old, and was smoking a pipe), and he added, "I sold her dearly!" It was difficult, however, in Russ to convey to their minds any but the simplest ideas. Neither Gilyaks nor Goldi have any written signs. The missionary living at Khabarofka has translated into Goldi parts of the Scriptures and the Greek liturgy, using, if I mistake not, Russian characters. The Goldi language, he told me, was much like the Manchu, and that, speaking the former, he

could make himself understood in the latter. Both, Mr. Howorth says, are Tunguse languages. M. de la Brunière writes that Goldi stands to Manchu much as Provençal does to French or Italian.*

The Russians have made some attempts to educate the Gilyaks. When Mr. Knox visited Mikhailofsky, he found a merchant farmer who was acting as superintendent of a school opened at the cost of the Government for the education of Gilyak boys. The copy-books exhibited fair specimens of penmanship, and on the desks were Æsop's fables translated into Russ. Close at hand was a forge, where the boys learned to work, and a carpenter's shop, with tools and turning lathe. The school at that time was in operation ten months a year, and the teacher belonged to one of the inferior ranks of the Russian clergy. I called on the priest at Mikhailofsky and inquired about the Gilyaks, but heard nothing of the existence of the school, and I am under the impression that it is discontinued. The Russians have two mission schools, however, on the Lower Amur, attended by 30 children—one at Troitzka for the Goldi, and another for the Gilyaks at Bolan, near

* I found that the priest was compiling a Goldi lexicon and grammar, and that, for his linguistic labours, he has received a medal from the Imperial Geographical Society. I am indebted to him for some of the words in the following short vocabulary, which will give an idea of the Manyarg, Manchu, Orochon, and Goldi tongues (which are Tunguse) compared with the Gilyak and Aïno dialects, which seem to belong to another family.

English.	*Manyarg.*	*Manchu.*	*Orochon.*	*Goldi.*	*Gilyak.*	*Aïno.*
One	omun	emu	omu	omu	niun	chine
Two	zur	juo	dhjou	dhjour	morsh	tu
Three	ilan	ilan	ulla	ellan	chiorch	che
Four	digin	duin	dii	duyin	murch	yne
Five	.....	sunja	tungha	tongha	torch	ashne
Dog	.....	.....	inda	inda	kan	sheta
Sable	.....	.....	nossa	seppha	.....	.....
Fox	.....	.....	solaki	solli	.....	.....

Malmuish. I heard of one Gilyak boy who had made sufficient progress to qualify him to become a psalmist, or *diechok*, in the Russian Church.

Like other heathen tribes, the Gilyaks have many superstitions. They do not allow fire to be carried in or out of a house, not even in a pipe, fearing such an act may bring ill luck in hunting or fishing. The same superstition is found in many parts of Russia. They appear, too, to be fatalists; for an Englishman at Nikolaefsk told me that if one falls into the water, the others will not help him out, on the plea that they would thus be opposing a higher power, who wills that he should perish. A Russian officer and his family were drowned some time since near the town, within easy reach of the boats of the Gilyaks, who could have saved them, but they did not attempt to do so.*

The Gilyaks believe in wooden idols or charms as antidotes to disease. I had practical illustration of this at Tyr, where I wished to buy some of the little amulets belonging to the head of a household; but he was at first unwilling to sell them, saying that he had found the wearing of them very efficacious in sickness. The offer of a silver piece, however, changed his mind;†

* These aborigines do not bear a favourable character. Schrenk says that the Gilyaks of the mainland are avaricious and covetous in their commercial transactions, but that among those of Sakhalin this propensity seeks satisfaction in theft and robbery. I shall presently relate a case in which they murdered a missionary apparently for the sake of getting the little merchandise he possessed.

† Sometimes they wear amulets fashioned like the part afflicted. A lame or injured person carries a small leg of wood, an arm, a hand, reminding one of the wax and silver arms, legs, hands, and hearts seen in churches on Roman images, and on the pictures of Russian saints. The missionary at Tyr gave me, in exchange for tracts, a charm to which is attached a stone, and also two rough wooden fish gods—one with a tail, the other without. The Gilyaks use these images or idols also in their Shaman worship.

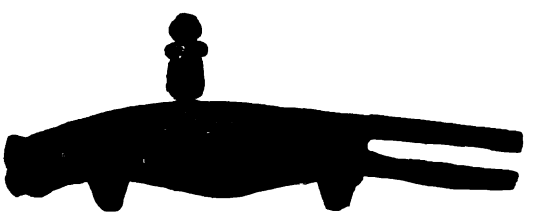
and he afterwards sold me not only his own, but those of his baby, one of them like a doll in a sitting posture; and after I had left the house, he sent after me a fish rudely cut in wood, and meant for a sturgeon, with a little god seated on his back. This had been used, apparently, not long before, on a fishing expedition, for there was gelatine and fresh blood in the mouth of the fish and the god. Sometimes poles shaped like idols

GILYAK IDOLS OR CHARMS

are placed before the houses. Another kind is carried as companion to the native on his journeys, whilst some are placed upon the summits of the mountains.

Other idols are in the form of the tiger, bear, etc., which animals are closely connected with their superstition, if not their religion. The tiger is said to be feared much more among the Gilyaks than the Goldi, and its appearance portends evil. If the remains are found of a man killed by a tiger, they are buried on the spot without ceremony. On the other hand, if a cow is found killed by a bear, it is eaten with

reat glee and rejoicing. It is said that neither ilyaks nor Goldi attempt to kill the tiger. Neither o they hunt the wolf, to which they attribute an evil influence. With the bear, however, things are very ifferent. There is in each Gilyak village a bear cage. saw them at both Mukhul and Tyr. They speak f the captive as *Mafa*, that is, "Chief Elder," and o distinguish him from the tiger, who is *Mafa sakhle*, nat is, "Black Chief." In hunting the bear they xhibit great intrepidity. In order not to excite his osthumous revenge, they do not surprise him, but ave a fair stand-up fight. When it is not desired to ecure the animal alive, the natives use a spear, such



GILYAK FISH-GOD OR IDOL.

s I saw at Krasnoiarsk, the head of which is covered vith spikes. It lies upon the ground, having cord ttached to the centre, and held by a man, the spear-oint being towards the bear. As Bruin advances to he man, the spear-head is raised from the ground, nd the beast throws himself upon it, but finds the hevaux-de-frize a disagreeable object to embrace. He is then set upon by the huntsmen and killed. It s much more interesting sport to catch a bear alive. A party of ten men or more enter the forest provided with straps, muzzle, and a collar with chain attached. Having discovered the whereabouts of the bear, he is surrounded, and one of them, jumping upon his back

in the twinkling of an eye, seizes hold of his ears. Another quickly fastens a running knot round the neck of the beast, and almost suffocates him. He is then muzzled, the collar passed round his neck, and he is led in triumph to the village to be put in the cage, and fattened on fish.* Bruin is not imprisoned, however, to be treated like the sacred bulls of Egypt. On festivals he is brought out, his paws tied, an iron chain put in his mouth, and he is bound between two fixed poles, an involuntary witness of the natives frolicking around him. On very grand occasions he takes a more direct share in the festival by being killed with superstitious ceremonies.† The people then go home, their chiefs staying to cut up the bear, the flesh of which is distributed to every house, and eaten with great zest, as food calculated to inspire and bring courage and luck. The head and paws, however, are treated with great reverence.‡ These ursine cere-

* When secured as a cub, he is frequently kept for three or four years. The natives are often seriously wounded in these encounters, but to this they do not object, since such wounds are thought to be marks of prowess, and to be killed by a bear is deemed a very happy death. Most of the writers on the Gilyaks mention this extraordinary procedure; and I heard it confirmed at Mikhailofsky by the missionary.

† The day falls in January of each year, and an Englishman at Nikolaefsk, who had been an eye-witness of the spectacle, described it to me thus: "The bear is led from his cage, dragged along and beaten with sticks, and presented at every house in the village; thus he gets exasperated to a high degree. He is then led to the river to a hole in the ice, where they try to make him drink water, and from a platter to eat food, though only a spoonful, both of which in his excited state he refuses, and which is precisely what they desire. He is then dragged back with shouts to the place of sacrifice, where, having been fastened to a post and allowed to repose awhile, he is shot through the heart with an arrow."

‡ Among the Gilyaks the head is kept by the patriarch of the village, and prayers are said to be offered to it for the space of a week. I was told at Nikolaefsk that the Gilyaks often bring bears' skins to sell; but by no chance do they bring, or can they be induced to bring, a hide with the

monies have, no doubt, given rise to the statement that the Gilyaks worship the bear. Mr. Collins goes so far as to say that they consider the bear an incarnated evil spirit; and the missionary at Mikhailofsky, in answer to my question, was not sure, but he thought it quite likely that they worshipped the animal. It is only proper to say, however, that when I met at Nikolaefsk the former elder of the White village, and asked him whether it was true that they worshipped the bear, he denied it, and said that they killed it as we should do any other animal for a feast; and that each village was bound in turn to provide a bear, on which occasion other villages assembled and joined in the banquet. I then inquired what was the religion of the Gilyaks. He said they had none, but upon being asked to whom they prayed, he looked up to the skies. He acknowledged that they practised Shamanism, but added that that was a mystery.

Thus far I have frequently used the word Shamanism, but have deferred explaining it till I treated of the Gilyaks, some of whose Shamanistic practices were described to me by an eye-witness—the telegraph engineer, to whom I have before alluded. The Gilyaks and the Siberian natives generally believe in the existence of good and bad spirits; but as the former perform only good, it is not thought necessary to pay them any attention.*

head or paws attached. The ears, jaw-bones, skull, and paws are sometimes hung upon trees to ward off evil spirits. Occasionally the skull is split, and suspended in their houses; and Mr. Knox observed in a Goldi house that part of one wall was covered with bear skulls and bones, horse-hair, wooden idols, and pieces of colored cloth.

* Mr. Collins does indeed say that the true God is adored without the shamans in autumn, and then by the whole community in mass, but I am unable to confirm this from anything I have read or heard. It would

The shamans, or priests, who may be male or female, are regarded as powerful mediators between the people and the evil spirits. The shaman, in fact, combines the double functions of doctor and priest. When a man falls sick, he is supposed to be attacked by an evil spirit, and the shaman is called to practise exorcism. There is a distinct spirit for every disease, who must be propitiated in a particular manner. The performance was thus described to me. The shaman puts on a huge bearskin cloak, which jingles with bells, pieces of iron, brass, or anything which will help, when shaken, to make a noise; the whole sometimes weighing as much as 100 lbs. He begins by singing in a monotonous murmur, and drinks brandy. Both patient and doctor are usually decorated with strips of wood or shavings, hanging round the waist and head. By the side of the patient are placed idols and brandy. The shaman sits on one side and the audience on the other. He approaches, drinks more brandy, begins to sing and jingle his bells, and *gives* brandy to the spectators. On the table are placed idols, fish, a squirrel's skin, millet and brandy, and a dog is tied under the table. The eatables are offered to the idols, and then distributed to be consumed by all present. Meanwhile the shaman contorts his body, and dances like one possessed, and howls to such an extent that Chinese merchants, who have come out of curiosity, have been known to flee in very

seem rather that all their efforts are directed to induce the evil spirits not to act; for these evil spirits are supposed to have power over hunting, fishing, household affairs, and the health and well-being of animals and men. Accordingly I inferred that Shamanism, so far as it can be called a religion, is one of fear, and not of love; that it is something for times of sorrow, such as death, sickness, and calamity, and not for occasions of joy or thanksgiving, as a birth or a wedding.

terror. He also beats a tambourine, and sometimes falls prostrate, as if holding communion with the spirits; and this kind of thing sometimes goes on for three days and nights, as long, probably, as provisions and spirits hold out, after which the patient is left to believe that he will get well; and the shaman receives his fee, which may be a reindeer, a dog, fish, brandy, or whatever the patient can afford. The shamans possess great power over their deluded subjects, though they are said to be somewhat held in check by the belief that, should they abuse their authority over evil spirits, to the detriment of a fellow human being, they will hereafter be long and severely punished. Their punishment is supposed to await them in a nether hell, dark and damp, filled with gnawing reptiles. A good shaman, however, who has performed wonderful cures receives, after death, a magnificent tomb to his memory.

The treatment of the dead among the Gilyaks would seem to vary. Réclus and Collins say that some tribes burn the dead on funereal pyres, and build a low frame over the ashes, and that others hang the coffins on trees, or place them on a scaffolding near the houses. The French trader at Nikolaefsk told me that in winter they wrap up the dead and put them in the forked branches of trees, out of the reach of animals, till the ground is thawed, and then, he supposed, the corpse was buried. The soul of the Gilyak is supposed to pass at death into his favourite dog, which is accordingly fed with choice food; and when the spirit has been prayed by the shamans out of the dog, the animal is sacrificed upon his master's grave. The soul is then represented as passing underground, lighted and guided there by its own sun and moon, and continuing to lead

there, in its spiritual abode, the same manner of life and pursuits as in the flesh.

The Russians have missionaries among the Gilyaks, but the Greek Church cannot claim the honour of bringing Christianity first among them. This belongs to a Roman missionary, M. de la Brunière, who perished in his endeavour.* On April 5th, 1846, he addressed a letter to the directors of the Seminary for Foreign Missions, telling them of his plans, and how strongly a Chinese friend tried to dissuade him, "representing to me the troops of tigers and bears which filled these deserts; and, whilst relating these things, he sometimes uttered such vehement cries that my two guides grew pale with horror. Being already a little accustomed to the figures of Chinese eloquence, I thanked him for his solicitude, assuring him that the flesh of Europeans had such a particular flavour that the tigers of Manchuria would not attempt to fasten their teeth in it."†

Then follows a touching portion, in which he writes:—"About the 13th or 15th of May, I will buy, if it please God, a small bark, in which I may descend the Amur to the sea to visit the 'long hairs.' I shall go alone, because

* Mr. Ravenstein states that the efforts of the Roman Catholic missionaries in Manchuria may be said to date from 1838; and in May 1845 M. de la Brunière left Kai Cheu with the intention of seeking the conversion of the "long-haired" people—that is, the Gilyaks of the Amur. This was before the Russian occupation of the river, and at a time when thus to wander, without permission, was contrary to Chinese law and full of danger, to say nothing of the difficulties of locomotion.

† M. de la Brunière then describes his fatigues, his only food being millet boiled in water. "You must cut and drag trees, light fires (necessary against the cold and tigers), prepare your victuals in wind and rain, and all this in the midst of a swarm of mosquitoes and gad-flies, who do not suspend their attacks till about 10 or 12 in the evening. Water and wood were abundant at first, . . . but 30 leagues from the Ussuri, the springs became so scarce that we were compelled to do like the birds of heaven, and eat the millet raw."

no one dare conduct me. I am well aware how difficult it will be to avoid the barges of the mandarins who descend the river from San-sin; but if it is the will of God that I arrive where I design going, His arm can smooth every obstacle, and guide me there in safety; and if it please Him that I return, He knows well how to bring me back."

He went, and at the White village was murdered.* I passed the spot a few hours before reaching Nikolaefsk, and the bay was pointed out where the missionary was put to death. My fellow-passengers said that De la Brunière reached the place with a baptized Mongol, whom he sent back on the day of his arrival, after which he proceeded to show the Gilyaks his watch, crucifix, spoons, etc.; and that two days after his arrival, they killed him on a small island where he had taken up his abode. One of my fellow-passengers was the Russian Lieutenant Yakimoff, who in 1857, with the Governor of the province, visited the village, and found the Gilyaks who had committed the murder. They had still in their possession the watch, crucifix, and spoons, which the Russians bought. During my stay at Nikolaefsk I met, as I have said, a former starosta of the White village, who told me that he had heard from his father the story of the missionary. Thus perished the first man who attempted to carry Christianity to the Gilyaks. What the Russians are doing among them I shall refer to when speaking hereafter of their missions to the neighbouring Goldi.

* Four years after, M. Venault was sent to the Lower Amur partly, if possible, to clear up the fate of De la Brunière. On arriving at what is now called the White village, he found no difficulty in ascertaining how matters had gone. M. de la Brunière, it seemed, was preparing his meal in a small bay, when ten men, attracted by the prospect of booty from the strange priest, went towards him, armed with bows and pikes. Having hit him with several arrows, seven of them struck him with their pikes, and the last stroke fractured his skull and proved mortal. This act consummated, the assassins divided the spoil.

CHAPTER XLVII.

NIKOLAEFSK.

My arrival.—Visit to prisons and hospitals.—Health statistics.—Siberian hospitals in general. — A Sunday service arranged. — Visits to inhabitants.—Russian customs, superstitions, and amusements.—Dancing.—Nikolaefsk town, arsenal, and commerce.—Mr. Emery.—Russian bribery.—Cost of provisions and labour.

NIKOLAEFSK, founded in 1853, rapidly grew into importance, but gradually waned after the removal of the "port"; and as our steamer approached on a cloudy evening, I seemed to have arrived at a very dismal and out-of-the-way part of the world. My spirits, however, had risen appreciably during the day. The perplexity in which I left Khabarofka, and my uncertainty as to how to reach San Francisco, have been alluded to; but on boarding the *Onon* I met Mr. Enoch Emery, an American merchant of Nikolaefsk. After almost disusing my native tongue for three weeks, I was able to speak again in English, and I now learnt that for £90 a first-class ticket might be taken from Yokohama in Japan to Euston Square in London, including food whilst traversing the two oceans, an allowance of 250 lbs. of luggage, and railway tickets for America and England. It was not so clear, however, how Japan was to be reached. The *Dragon* was not expected at Nikolaefsk, I heard, nor was there any regular means of getting away other than by re-

tracing my steps to the Ussuri and Vladivostock. A Russian gunboat had been lying at the mouth of the Amur, the previous day, with provisions for Dui in Sakhalin, by which it was suggested that I might get a passage to the island, and perhaps be trans-shipped to Japan or China on some chance vessel calling for coal. But when we reached Nikolaefsk this gunboat had started a few hours before; and thus I landed—with regard to my future movements—as full of uncertainty as ever.

I had fallen, nevertheless, into good hands; for, in talking to Mr. Emery, it transpired that we had common friends in Petersburg, one of whom had spoken to me of the Amur, and would gladly have given me introductions, had I not persisted in saying that I did not intend to go so far. Mr. Emery invited me to be his guest—an invitation doubly welcome in a place where was no better hotel than a beershop, and because with him I should have the advantage of conversing in English.

Baron Stackelberg was lodged near me, and in the morning we went to the chief civil authority, M. Andreyeff, to whom I was introduced as a person desirous of information about the prisons of Sakhalin, and of a passage, if possible, to the island. To my surprise M. Andreyeff also was acquainted with some of my friends in Petersburg, and he at once promised the information; but it was uncertain, he said, when a ship would leave again with provisions.

The police-master was sent for to take me to see the prisons of the town. The police-station was the first building we entered; it contained a few rooms for temporary accommodation. In one of them were

flogging instruments I had heard of at Kara and elsewhere, and had vainly inquired for more than once. I have no reason to suppose, however, they were hidden from me in other places, a lawyer having told me that the troichatka, or plète, was used only at Kara, Nikolaefsk, and Dui. What they were like shall be told hereafter. I will only say for the present they were the most terrible things of the kind I had ever seen. There was a guard-room in the station where Cossacks were sitting on the floor, eating with wooden spoons from a common saucepan, and other rooms occupied by clerks and officials. I was then taken to the town prison, containing 68 prisoners in half-a-dozen rooms. Some of the men had just come from the bath, the advantages of which were patent. But I do not recollect seeing accommodation in any of the Siberian prisons for washing the hands and face except at Tomsk, where was a sort of caldron mounted on a tripod, and from which, through four tiny pipes, water was forced, in Russian fashion, to trickle on the hands. I fancy, however, that not only with prisoners, but among the lower classes generally, minor ablutions between the weekly or fortnightly steaming of the bath are regarded more or less as supererogatory.

In the western suburb of the town was the *étape*, a prison in which 150 persons could be lodged on their way to Sakhalin. Detached, but not far distant, was the kitchen, in which were convicts of good behaviour, allowed the run of the town by day, though compelled to sleep in the building at night. They could thus earn money if they chose.* Both prisons

* So rare is it for them to see a visitor to the prison in these parts, that some of the men supposed I was sent by some foreign Government to

THE ETAPE PRISON, NIKOLAEFSK.

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in the town were reported to the Emperor as "old, and built of bad material, wanting proper sanitary arrangements, and inconvenient for their purpose."

A similar description would have been not far wrong of the Nikolaefsk hospitals, of which there were three —two military and one civil. In the civil hospital, partly supported by voluntary contributions, they were sadly cramped for room—so much so that, in one chamber, alongside of other patients was a boy suffering from small-pox. The chief doctor had, on his own account, opened an extra room for the blind and the infirm.* In the hospital of the 6th East Siberian battalion were 24 beds only, whereas by law there should have been 48. Happily only five beds were occupied at the time of my visit, and the list of diseases treated in the hospital during the preceding 18 months appeared to show that the medical staff were doing their work successfully. The chief physician was a German, as are many of the doctors in Russia, and he took great pains to acquaint me with all I wished to know.† I found some large hospitals for the navy at Vladivostock, with 108 patients at the time of my

inquire into their condition; and I heard that they subsequently came to seek me with a written paper, but I was not in the house when they called. My position having been explained to them, they declined to leave the paper, and so I heard no more of the matter.

* They received from Government only £15 per annum for a clerk, paper, and ink, and so were unable, they said, to get books for the patients. I was glad therefore to send, and they were thankful to accept, 50 copies of the New Testament—two for every room, and the remainder to be given to departing convalescents who could read.

† In 1878 there entered the hospital 347 cases, suffering from 39 diseases, of which the principal were: bronchitis, 46; syphilis, 42; fevers, 39; pleuritis, 26; internal cold, 18; rheumatism, 14; and so on in diminishing numbers. During the six months immediately preceding my visit they had received but 83 patients, whilst for the entire year and a half 13 patients only had died. Besides these they had treated a large

visit; but the hospital that pleased me most in the province, not to say in all Siberia, was that at Khabarofka, built on the newest principles, and leaving nothing to be desired.*

They have in the Sea-coast province no madhouses, properly so called; but lunatics are treated in a ward of the Nikolaefsk hospital. Of eight cases during 1878, four recovered, two remained, and two died. Besides these hospitals I have named, there is in the province one each at Petropavlovsk, Ghijiga, and Okhotsk. Looking at the Siberian hospitals with an unprofessional eye, I may say that they struck me as fairly good. I have twice met Englishmen in Russian hospitals,—one at Archangel, and the other in the Urals,—and they both said they had every attention. The hospitals of the country are supported by the Government, by the army, navy, and civil departments respectively. None are supported entirely by voluntary contributions. Government servants, being poor, pay nothing. Civilians pay, and one of the good features of the Russian hospitals is that persons of the middle classes may enter, and by a small extra payment receive medical attendance and superior accommodation.†

number of slight ailments of out-patients, and given advice to promiscuous applicants to the number of nearly 3,000.

* It was fitted for 100 male and five female patients, with superior rooms for officers, and a separate apartment for syphilitic diseases, in which last was a mad Russian soldier, who in early life had been a travelling acrobat, and who inveighed to me in French against the doctor, who, he said, kept him there in confinement. Hereditary syphilis was reported to the Emperor to be the most dangerous disease in the province, for an inquiry into which a commission of four persons, with the whole medical staff, had been appointed. In a hospital in Ekaterineburg I found half the patients, at Vladivostock one-third, and in Krasnoiarsk one-fifth, suffering from syphilis, and in Kamchatka they have a barrack for the treatment of this disease only.

† Thus at Perm, whilst a poor patient was received into the hospital at

The Siberian towns seemed fairly well supplied with medical men; but it was rather appalling on the Ussuri to hear from a telegraph official that he had no medical man within 200 miles to the south, and 300 to the north.*

My coming to Nikolaefsk did not long remain unknown, for it was suggested that on the Sunday I should conduct a service, there being no resident Protestant minister, though they had a Roman chapel in the town. The pro-Governor, Mr. Andreyeff, readily gave his sanction, offered his house for a place of meeting, and sent round by the police a notice requesting all to sign who purposed to attend. More than 30 signed, and before Sunday several called on me. I was invited to a dinner on my first Friday in Nikolaefsk. It happened to be the birthday of Mr. Schenk, the worthy manager of the principal store. The shop was closed, and his friends called in the morning to felicitate him, and to drink and eat nick-nacks from a sideboard. In the evening a capital dinner was served with asparagus and preserved fruits, which it was hard to realize we were eating in one of the most dreary parts of Siberia, where they have seven months' winter, and where the navigation does not open till the end of May. Several at table spoke English, and near me sat a merchant who had lived in the Sandwich Islands and in Kamchatka. Mr. Emery

the rate of ten days for 5*s.*, better accommodation could be secured for 1*s.* 4*d.* a day. At Vladivostock civilians paid 1*s.* 9*d.* a day, the price being fixed on a three years' average.

* This probably is worse towards Kamchatka; for in 1878 there were four medical posts vacant—that of chemist at Nikolaefsk, and doctor at Sofiisk, Ghijiga, and Okhotsk respectively—not a matter for much wonder, seeing that the salary at the best was but £40 a year!

the same week had a party to lunch; and Mr. Andreyeff gave a dinner in his garden to some of my fellow-passengers, myself, and the military commandant. The dinner began with "schnapps," and among the dishes was a salmon pie, with rice on the top, the dinner ending with cream and wild raspberries, of which last there were bushels growing outside the town.

I made the acquaintance also of some of the naval officers, such as the captain of the *Ermak*, to whom I gave books for his men, and Lieutenant Wechman, the captain of the port. The latter was a Protestant, who invited me on the second Sunday to hold the service in his house, which I did, and sent books for the barracks of the men under his command. These social occasions gave me opportunities to see something of Russians at home, their customs, superstitions, and amusements. Tea was usually offered whenever a call was made; and as lemons were not to be had so far away in summer, a spoonful of jam was often put in the glass instead. They have a custom in Russia of addressing friends, or those to whom they wish to be polite, by their Christian name plus their patronymic, or Christian name of their father, which in the case of Mr. Emery sounded odd to me to hear a lady ask, "Enoch, son of Simeon, may I give you a glass of tea?"*

Among the superstitions of the Russians may be mentioned the not liking to begin a journey on a

* This is a Semitic custom which has been retained by the Russians. Even the Emperor and all members of the Imperial family are so addressed—one reason given for the preference of the Christian to the family name being, that to be a Christian is a greater honour than to be an earthly noble.

Monday. The Governor-General of Western Siberia old me he usually chose that day expressly, in order o avoid the crowd of fellow-passengers. Nor do they ike to take edge-tools from another person's hand, nor o pass the salt, or, if it be done, the person who receives nust smile blandly to break the spell. Again, when a man is starting upon some special business, he thinks t very unlucky if the first person he meets in the street should be a priest; and if the eyes of one dying are not closed by a friend, it is imagined that there will soon be another death in the family.

The Russians struck me as a people exceedingly ill-provided with manly amusements. They have nothing to correspond to our cricket, boating, or football. Their young men seem incapable of rising to any greater exertion of mind or body than that demanded for billiards, cards, drinking, and smoking. I saw some soldiers, however, playing with a large, heavy steel pin, like a tenpenny nail with a heavy head.* An out-door game played by girls is called "*skaka*" (to jump), something like the English game of see-saw, only that the two parties do not sit but stand on the plank, which is only some four feet long, and is jumped upon with sufficient force that when one person reaches the ground the other springs into the air, and so on alternately. Swings, too, are in great demand at fairs and such gatherings. I was treated to one on the

* They raised it above the shoulders, holding the head of the nail in the palm, and threw it down, making the point pass through a ring, about an inch and a half in diameter, lying on the ground. The person throwing it sometimes buried it to the head in the soil, whence another had to unearth it, or it was driven through a piece of wood, from which it was another's business to extricate it. The feat appeared very easy, but in the few attempts I made I did not succeed in sticking the pin in the ground.

Sukhona, suspended from a cross-beam not less, I should judge, than 40 feet high.

Dancing is one of the most popular of indoor amusements, and I had a good opportunity of witnessing the peasants' performance of it at Mikhailofsky; for on the evening of our enforced stay a *soirée* was extemporized. The dancers were the young men and girls of the village, dressed in their heavy boots and cotton gowns, but washed and brushed up for the occasion. The manner in which the girls sat in a row at the commencement, and the men hung together in an outer room, struck me very much like a piece of human nature which is seen all the world over. The music consisted of a fiddle, accordion, and tiny bells; and in the first dance, two youths having nodded condescendingly to partners, the four stood up and figured before us, one feature of the dance being that the men from time to time stamped heavily with their feet.* At an early stage of the proceedings cigarettes were handed round, and men, girls, and old women all began to smoke—a sure sign that they were not Starovers, or Old Believers, for they turn out their sons if they smoke and call them "pogani," or "nasty,"—the practice having been introduced into some parts of Siberia. I

* Perhaps it was akin to the Mazourka, which had its birthplace in Poland, for I remember witnessing a similar performance in the salt-mines of Cracow. The second dance was a national one, by a single pair, and something like a Scottish hornpipe, the man occasionally sinking down almost to the ground. Then the pair waved handkerchiefs to each other. I was told that this dance is made to represent the various stages of courtship, and that a good dancer does not go through the same figure twice. Another dance was by four couples, in which the ship's machinist figured prominently in his heavy boots. One man also crawled on all fours, and twice passed through the extended legs of another, and so they continued till the cotton shirts of the men showed they were getting wet, and the company were growing tired.

as told, within the last quarter of a century.* After ance No. 3, which was by four girls only, two plates ere handed round—one of sweets, the other of cedar uts. The latter, from the monotonous gaps they so ften fill at parties, are called by a word which means Siberian conversation." Other refreshments followed

RUSSIAN PEASANT GIRL.

in the shape of black bread and cucumbers, the whole affair looking very formal and solemn; but I am not sure whether this was normal, or whether the peasants were overawed by the strange company. I heard that

* The Starovers object to smoking upon the literal meaning of the text, "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." According to Dr. Pinkerton, an ukase was issued in 1634 condemning those who took snuff, or sold or even possessed tobacco, to be knouted, to have their nostrils torn open, or ears cut off, and to be sent into exile.

at Nikolaefsk, in winter, they have frequent balls at the club, but in the summer the evenings are given to the promenade.

At this time of day I usually took my constitutional, and searched about into every hole and corner of the town. Its population stands in the Almanack at 5,350, which probably was right some years ago, but it was estimated to me as having decreased to 3,500. The houses extend a mile and a half along the left bank of the river on a wooded plateau about fifty feet high. The landing-place is available only for small craft. Larger vessels lie in the middle of the river, and there is a wooden pier from which stairs lead to the plateau. The visitor is then opposite the church, built of wood, having one large cupola and four small ones. Behind the church stands what was the "Admiralty," but is now the police-station, having a flagstaff with semaphore for signalling vessels in the harbour. To the west of the church is the officers' club, and a few minutes' walk to the east is situated the admiral's house, the palace of the town, having around it a few flowers struggling for existence. In 1866 Mr. Knox found at Nikolaefsk machine-shops, foundries, and dockyard, into which last I wandered one evening. and thought of the time when nations are to learn war no more; for whereas there had been 800 men employed in the place a dozen years before, I found it covered with weeds, the workshops closed, and rusty iron lying about in all directions. Here and there were heaps of bombshells and cannon-balls, with a few grape-shot. Except the sentinel at the entrance, I met not a soul in the place, from which the glory had plainly departed. So it was, in fact, with the town generally. The boarded

pavements are fast rotting, and allow the unwary foot-passenger to step through into the drains. There is sufficient grass in the streets for cows to graze, and pigs are occasionally seen there looking about for food. The Governor's house is falling into decay, and its grand rooms are looking and smelling dusty, musty, and old. Again, the buildings erected for the higher Government officials are inhabited by smaller and feebler folk, and some of the shops are closed.

Nikolaefsk, nevertheless, from its position at the mouth of a river which is navigable so far into Asia, will probably continue its present commercial standing.*

There was a medical officer at Nikolaefsk, whose duty it was to examine the articles sold for food, and who during my stay lodged a complaint against a merchant for selling damaged flour, although he sold it as such, and at a reduced price. I heard Russia and Siberia spoken of as a country where capital can be placed out to great advantage. One merchant said he could easily get 6 per cent. for his money in Russia, on security which he deemed satisfactory. I have quoted in an earlier chapter the 30 or 40 per cent. given for capital at the gold-mines, and one man I met told me that in Western Siberia he made as much as 100 per cent. on a considerable portion of his capital.

My host, Mr. Emery, had come to the Amur as a

* There came to it, in 1878, 12 merchant vessels, bringing manufactured goods to the value of £52,781; alcohol, £4,705; and wines, beer, and porter, £1,604. I was told by one of the merchants that Hamburg is the cheapest market for goods for a new country, there being more imitations made there than elsewhere, which perhaps accounts for the complaint made to the Russian Government that the imported manufactures are of the lowest quality. The same merchant told me, however, that when he imported good articles, the Russians merely admired them; but that when he imported cheap ones, they *bought* them.

boy, and began at the bottom of the ladder; but at the age of 20 he was able to count his gains by thousands. He was but 27 when we met, but was looking forward in a year or two to retire.*

One of the drawbacks to honest trading in Russia is the bribery which officials expect when purchasing Government supplies. An instance of bribery practised on the rivers was described to me thus: A shipping agent, for example, carries 5,000 poods of freight, for which the sender pays him at a certain rate for Government duty. At the custom-house the agent makes out his bill as having only one-tenth the real freight, and gives ten roubles each to the officers, who make out a false bill to correspond with his own. It is then signed by the head official, who receives no bribe on the spot, but occasionally drives to the agent's office, says that he is short of money, and asks for the loan of 300 roubles or more. The agent "lends" them, not dreaming, however, to see them again. At the end of the year the agent finds himself several thousands of roubles in pocket, the higher official drives his carriage on a surprisingly small stipend, and the lower officials, having been put into their office by the higher, do not even ask for their salary, and yet manage to live in houses of their own procuring.†

* He had, indeed, already retired in a fashion; for the winter season at Nikolaefsk had become to him so insupportably dull, that for the last few years he had posted off in autumn to Petersburg and other European markets, and then, chartering a schooner of 350 tons with merchandise, he had either accompanied it round the remainder of the globe, or crossed the Atlantic to America to see his parents, and then sailed over the Pacific by the following spring. In this way he had several times made the circuit of the world, going west or east, as business or inclination decided. He allowed 18 days in winter for a sledge journey of 3,300 miles, from Moscow to Irkutsk.

† These and similar practices are not confined to merchants, but go

Again, gambling and drunkenness are two principal snares besetting foreign traders in Siberia, whose time in winter hangs heavily, and where, in seaport towns, officers and large consumers expect to be frequently *fêted* and invited to drink. Immorality is the third snare, which leads many astray who are removed from the restraints of home, and who otherwise hold their heads above gambling and insobriety.

The trade customs of Nikolaefsk were, in some respects, superior to those in the interior,—due, no doubt, to the influence of the Germans and Americans. In the bazaars of Petersburg one has to bargain for everything. A shopman asked me, for instance, 10*s.* for a box, for which he afterwards "touted" to me, and took 7*s.* At Nikolaefsk business is done at fixed prices, and I was glad to find that, though compelled to close their stores for many hours on the greater Russian festivals, the foreign merchants, for the most part, did not open at all on Sunday.

The weather during my stay on the Lower Amur was chilly and disagreeable, and the season for garden produce was about a fortnight late. On August 19th we ate new potatoes. They cost 2½*d.* per lb., but eight days later they cost but 1*d.* per lb. Cucumbers were ready on the 10th of August, and on the 27th

down even to the isvostchiks, who come to Petersburg from the country and hire themselves to their masters by the month, having to bring in 5*s.* a day. At the end of their term the master is said to do his best to swindle the cabmen, whilst they, taking their food and scanty wages, do their best to make a picking from their fares. Sometimes, however, the biter is bitten; for driving in the capital one day my isvostchik pointed to a large building, and said that he had just brought there a well-dressed woman, who had asked him to drive at the side of the pavement, because the road was better there, she said; and then, when opposite the door, she had sprung off the low vehicle, and run in without paying.

they were selling for 3*s.* per hundred. Eggs cost 5*s.* per hundred, fresh butter 2*s.* 3*d.* per pound, and beef from 7*d.* to 8½*d.* On August 27th we had our first spring cabbage made into little pies and eaten with soup. The price of these cabbages, to a "friend," was 5*d.* each, but they were expected shortly to fall to 16*s.* or 20*s.* per hundred. I do not remember tasting mutton, but was informed that a good sheep weighs about half a cwt., and costs alive, at Nikolaefsk, from 22*s.* to 30*s.*

In Western Siberia, about Tomsk, a sheep can be bought for 2*s.* I am told that Russians in general abhor mutton, and my informant's housekeeper wonders the English can eat it, for *she* would as willingly eat cat, dog, or rat as such "garbage." Game and fish were surprisingly plentiful. I bought in the streets at Nikolaefsk a capercailzie (called *glukhar*, or deaf bird) for 10*d.*, which was thought by no means cheap; and a blackcock was offered for a similar price. The cost of salmon, however, was most surprising. Up to the 20th August salmon trout, weighing from 10 to 12 lbs., cost as much as 5*d.* each, but they were then said to be *dear*. On the 15th August a large salmon, the first fish of the season, and weighing perhaps 15 lbs., was offered to me for 7½*d.*, but this was considered quite "a fancy price." From the 1st September to the 17th, during which period the large fish are caught, weighing from 15 lbs. to 25 lbs., they may be bought for 10*s.* per hundred, or 1*d.* each! *

* About 500 tons of them are salted yearly at Nikolaefsk, for winter use, the Government having, annually, two contracts for 16 tons, and others besides. For the most part, however, the fish of the province is consumed

I was fortunate in finding at Nikolaefsk some English books, and among them the travels of Collins, Knox, and Ravenstein, on the Amur. The reading of these occupied much of my time, and I sometimes wandered down to the river-side—especially in the morning—to the pier, to watch the Gilyaks sell their fish.* Moored alongside the pier were some lighters of English build, which were failures for the particular purpose for which they had been constructed, though they made admirable landing-places. There were also several barges converted into floating shops, one of which was the property of a Frenchman, who had been a tutor in England. He dealt largely with the Gilyaks, and offered me a live eagle, obtained from them, for 6*s.*; a fish-skin coat for 8*s.*, and a tiger's skin for £3 10*s.* For bear-skins he asked from 10*s.* upwards, whereas in Krasnoiarsk they sell from 10*s.* down to 3*s.* each.

Thus passed by my enforced stay at Nikolaefsk, and, after trying in vain to get a passage to Japan, I determined to retrace my steps by the post-boat, which I started to do on Saturday, 30th of August. Before proceeding southwards, however, I must give some account, in the next two chapters, of what I have been able to learn concerning Kamchatka and the island of Sakhalin.

where it is caught, and it is only quite recently that exportation in small quantities has commenced.

* The plentiful season commenced on August 25th, and salmon were sold for five roubles per hundred. These were commonly used for salting, but I found that they sold pieces of dried salmon and other fish a foot long, at the rate of 1*s.* per hundred, as winter food for dogs. Among the less valued fish of the Amur are the dolphin, trout, and others, known by the name of *sazan*, *karass*, and a white fish called *suig*—the last being esteemed in Petersburg a delicacy.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

KAMCHATKA.

The Upper Primorsk.—History of north-eastern maritime discovery.—Travellers in the Upper Primorsk.—The Sea of Okhotsk and fisheries.—Bush's journey.—Okhotsk and its natives.—Kamchatka.—Its volcanoes, earthquakes, springs.—Garden produce and animals.—Kamchatdales.—Their number and character.—The Koriaks.—Their warlike spirit.—Houses of settled and wandering Koriaks.—Food.—Herds of deer.—Marriage customs.—Putting sick and aged to death.—The Chukchees.—Their habitat.—Diminution of fur animals.—Vegetation.—Intoxicating plants.—Nordenskjold on the Chukchee coast.—Onkelon antiquities.

NORTH-EASTERN Siberia, or the Upper Primorsk, is to be the subject of this chapter, for which I have chosen the title of Kamchatka as best recalling the locality. Unlike the Amur, of which we have been treating, this portion of the Sea-coast province cannot be spoken of as new; for its discovery dates back more than a century. Of late years, all eyes have been turned in this direction by the maritime achievements of Professor Nordenskjold, who, having completed his wonderful travel by water, was being fêted at Yokohama, whilst I was lying weather-bound off the coast.*

* Among early sources of information concerning voyages to the north-eastern seas, we have the "History of Kamchatka and the Kurile Islands," translated from the Russian by Dr. Grieve in 1764. In 1802 Martin Sauer wrote an account of a geographical and astronomical expedition to the north parts of Russia, the mouth of the Kolima, to East Cape, and islands in the Eastern Ocean, performed by Commodore

During my stay at Nikolaefsk, I was further north than the capital of Kamchatka, and Petropavlovsk was distant only a few days' sail. Intervening, however, was the Sea of Okhotsk, the mention of which so often recurs in connection with the north-eastern parts of Siberia.* Formerly it was much frequented by whales. The captain of the *Tunguse* told me at Nikolaefsk that, as a young man, he used to go to the Okhotsk Sea in a whaler; but so many of these animals had been killed, he said, that during one season they caught only three of them, which he

Joseph Billings from 1785 to 1794; and within 20 years afterwards Captain Burney published a chronological history of north-eastern voyages of discovery, and of the early eastern navigation of the Russians; but these brought us no further than 1819. The admirable "Géographie Universelle" of M. Réclus (by far the best geographical work on Siberia I have met with) gives a map showing the routes not only of the principal travellers by land, but also furnishes an excellent account of Siberian maritime discoveries down to the present day.

To confine ourselves more particularly to Kamchatka, we have the travels in 1787-8 of M. de Lesseps, Consul of France, and interpreter to the Count de la Perouse, who landed in the peninsula, and thence made his way by land round the northern coast of the Okhotsk Sea, and crossed Asia and Europe to Paris. A quarter of a century later, Peter Dobell followed the same route, and was deserted by his Tunguse guides in the vicinity of Okhotsk, which town, however, he at length reached, and crossed Siberia to Europe. Accounts of remarkable travels in this part of the country have been written by two Americans—Messrs. Bush and Kennan—who went, in 1865, to make preliminary surveys for a proposed route for telegraph wires intended to traverse Behring's Straits from America, continue across the peninsula, and round the Sea of Okhotsk to Nikolaefsk, and thence to the Chinese frontier. The enterprise was ultimately abandoned, but not till the country had been surveyed from the straits to the mouth of the Amur, in doing which these authors passed through portions of country untravelled by foreigners before.

For a short account of the early exploration of Siberia by sea and land, *see* Appendix E.

* It is a great gulf shut in from the North Pacific Ocean by the promontory of Kamchatka, and a chain of islands reaching down to Japan It measures from 1,200 to 1,400 miles from north to south, and from 700 to 800 miles from east to west, the greatest depth being 700 yards.

thought poor. At Vladivostock, however, I met with Mr. Lindholm, who has a steamer and a sailing-ship engaged in the whale trade, and from him I gathered that at the present high price of whalebone, it answers well if, during a season, a boat takes two large whales.* The whales feed on the molluscs of the Okhotsk Sea, some of which Erman mentions as being eaten by the Chinese.† Whether the molluscs are less abundant than of yore, or whether so many whales have been killed that few remain, the diminution of the trade was impressed on my mind by meeting in the Primorsk several Finlanders who had left their fatherland in the expectation of speedily making their fortunes by whaling in the Okhotsk Sea; but their project proved a bubble.‡

The only man, I believe, other than an aboriginal, who has travelled round the Okhotsk Sea, starting

* It was curious to hear that whales are now more shy than formerly, and that the whalers dare not row their boats, but must sail them to the monsters, who are then sometimes frightened away even by the baling out of water. I learned, too, that in the Sea-coast province they have great difficulty in procuring a sufficiency of suitable sailors for the trade; for although ordinary seamen will do for a part of the crew, there ought to be about eight of the officers and men who are experts.

† I saw a considerable number of dried *trepangs*, or sea-snails, at Vladivostock, worth in China 30 dollars the pickle of 133 lbs., say 1*s.* a lb. The Chinese employ them in the preparation of a nutritious soup in common with sharks' fins, edible birds' nests, and an esculent seaweed, or cabbage, of which last 3,000 tons are taken yearly from the bays of the Sea-coast province.

‡ They sailed round Cape Horn to Siberia, but met with foul weather, which delayed them for a whole season, and initiated their failure. Not having the means to return to Finland, they were getting their living as best they could. The commander of the *Onon*, Captain Stjerncreutz, was one of them. I discovered that he was a cousin of Miss Heijkel, my fellow-passenger in Finland in 1876, who, to help me in procuring a horse, introduced me to the family I have mentioned at Wasa. This was the third Finlander I chanced to meet in Siberia with whom I could claim a sort of acquaintance.

from Nikolaefsk, by land, is Mr. Bush, the author of "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-shoes," all three of which he certainly had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with. Nothing, perhaps, in his journey would appear more remarkable to those unacquainted with the records of Arctic travel than his sleeping, night after night, in the open air of a Siberian winter, between a couple of ordinary blankets, lined with deer-skin, between which, on awaking, he sometimes found himself buried, as were his dogs, beneath recently-fallen snow. Proceeding round the coast, the first village we approach after leaving the Amur is Udskoi, with 150 inhabitants. It is situated on the river Ud, and was one of the earliest Cossack stations. Further north is Port Ayan, to which, in 1844, the American Company transferred their station for trading in fish and furs.

On the Okhota, further north, is the town of Okhotsk, which has given its name to the adjoining sea. Its population was never large, though it had a certain amount of activity before 1807, when the burdens of many thousands of horses passed through to the Russian settlements on the Pacific. It is a sorry-looking place of 200 inhabitants, though many a traveller has been glad to reach it after a severe journey from Yakutsk. The only animals kept at Okhotsk, says Mr. Knox, are cows and dogs. In summer the dogs are shrewd enough to go into the water and catch their own salmon, wading into the stream and standing, like storks, till the fish appear. The natives living on this western coast are the Lamuti, a seafaring Tunguse tribe, said to be uncorrupted from their primitive simplicity, either by the

tricks of the Russian merchants or those of the aboriginal Yakutes. From Okhotsk to Nikolaefsk is a voyage of 400 miles, but there is no road by land: hence the remarkable nature of Bush's journey.

The traveller who, from Okhotsk, wishes to visit Kamchatka may reach Petropavlovsk by sea through the Kuriles, or continue round the coast by road. The latter course takes him through Yamsk to Ghijiga, at the north of the bay, a distance of 1,100 miles. He then descends along the western coast of Kamchatka to Tigil, 760 miles further, at which point he strikes inland to a valley lying below active volcanoes, and so reaches Petropavlovsk, on the shore of the North Pacific, a land journey from Okhotsk of 2,540 miles, accomplished by deer, horses, and dogs.

Kamchatka is so called after the name of its principal river. The peninsula is 800 miles long, and from 30 to 120 miles wide; its total area being about 80,000 square miles, or five times the size of Switzerland. The southern extremity, called Cape Lopatka, is a low, narrow tongue of land, which, as it proceeds northwards, widens and rises into rocky and barren hills, with small valleys timbered with willow and stunted birch. Two degrees north the range divides, one portion running nearly due north and the other taking a north-easterly direction. In the fork formed by these two chains lies the valley of the river Kamchatka. The western chain rarely rises above 3,000 feet, but the eastern chain has many high volcanoes, among them Kluchevsky, which is somewhat higher than Mont Blanc, and not far from the sea.*

* Many ranges of terraces and secondary summits surround the mountain as with an enormous pedestal, so that its base has a circumference

Earthquakes are more frequent, perhaps, in Kamchatka than in any other country. The number of shocks felt at Petropavlovsk averages eight annually.*

The climate of Kamchatka is much milder than in the eastern parts of the mainland. The frost sets in about the middle of October, but up to December the temperature rarely falls 10° below the freezing point of Fahrenheit, though in severe winters the thermometer sometimes sinks to 25° below zero. Snow-storms with wind, called *poorgas*, are prevalent in February and March. They sometimes take up whole masses of snow, and form drifts several feet deep in a few minutes, burying, it may be, travellers, dogs, and sledges, who remain thus till the storm is over. Dogs begin to howl at the approach of a poorga, and try to burrow in the snow if the wind is cold or violent.

About 50 miles west of Petropavlovsk is a remarkable warm spring, into which when you enter, says Mr. Collins, the sensation is as if the skin would be

of not less than 200 miles. The fissured summit constantly smokes, and twice or thrice a year throws out cinders. Ashes and dust have sometimes been carried to a distance of 180 miles, and covered the ground many inches deep, preventing the Kamchatdales from sledging. An eruption in 1737 ejected much lava, and this, dissolving the glaciers, poured into the neighbouring valleys a deluge of waters. In 1854 another stream of fire descended from Mount Kluchevsky. From the crater of the Avasha, immediately behind Petropavlovsk, have been thrown at the same time stones, lava, and water. The following are some of the active volcanoes: Korakovsky, 11,200 feet; Chevelutch, 10,529; Jupanof, 8,478; Avatcha, 8,344; and the Great Tolbach, 7,618; whilst, of the extinct volcanoes, Uchkin is the highest, with an elevation of 10,977 feet.

* Mr. Hill describes one lasting no less than eight minutes. During the whole of this time rumbling and loud noises were heard beneath the ground, and the earth trembled violently. Some of those who experienced it said they thought at one moment that the earth was sinking beneath them, and the sea about to rush in upon the land, and the next that they were rising upon the crust of the crater of a volcano in terrible eruption beneath the ground

removed, whilst the stones and mud on the bottom fairly burn the feet, added to which the steam and gas, ascending from this natural caldron, fairly take away the breath. In a short time, however, bathers become red like lobsters, and find the temperature enjoyable. The water is very buoyant. It is used by the natives for all sorts of diseases.

The valley watered by the Kamchatka is composed of fine mould, and has abundant natural productions—fir, birch, larch, poplar, willow, cedar, and juniper, and that of larger size than in the same latitude elsewhere in Asia. Raspberries, strawberries, whortleberries, currants, and cranberries abound; and flowers are seen in spring in almost tropical luxuriance. There is much grass in the lower lands, and Mr. Hill records an extraordinary phenomenon in a place he visited respecting the growth and preservation of potatoes.* There grows, likewise, a plant in the country called by the natives *krapeva*, from which they make a coarse but very durable cloth. It resembles our stinging-nettle, but is of larger growth and stronger fibre.

Among the animals of Kamchatka there is none with which the traveller becomes more familiar than the dog, which is found wild on the hills. The color is usually buff or silver-grey, and in nature and disposition he resembles the mastiff and the wolf,

* Admiral Ricord, a former governor of Kamchatka, imported potatoes for seed, and they were planted. but not taken up the following autumn. The next year, being found abundant and good, they were allowed to remain, where, dying and propagating continually, they yielded more than were locally required. Mr. Hill accounts for the phenomenon by the fact that neither damp nor frost could reach the potatoes; for though in winter the snow covers the surface of the frozen ground, yet so great in this vicinity is the internal volcanic heat that the earth is quite dry, and never frozen below a few inches from the surface.

sleeping, like the latter, more by day than by night. He is intelligent as regards his work, but not affectionate, as may be said of the steppe dogs, and has to be ruled by the rod. It is not usually safe to leave these dogs loose, for they kill fowls, deer, smaller dogs, and sometimes even children.* As on the Amur, they are usually fed on fish, particularly the salmon, besides which there are caught in Kamchatka, or off its coasts, the cod, herring, smelt, as also whales, walruses, and seals. The country abounds with geese, ducks, and a variety of wild fowl.

The southern part of the peninsula is inhabited by the Kamchatdales, which is the name the Russians give them; but they are called *Konchalo* by their neighbours the Koriaks. They have large round faces, prominent cheek-bones, small sunken eyes, flattened noses, black hair, and tawny complexions. Their language, very guttural, is largely inflexional, or composed of invariable root forms modified by prefixes. The poverty of the language may be inferred from their having but one word for the sun and moon (*khiht*), but still more from the circumstance that it has scarcely any names for fish or birds, which are merely distinguished by the moon in which they are most plentiful. The language is spoken in the south among the Kuriles, and in the

* They love sledging, and upon a journey of four or five days will work from 14 to 16 hours out of the 24 without tasting food, the idea of their masters being that, when travelling, the less food the dogs receive, short of starvation, the better. The travelling sledge weighs about 25 lbs. (a freight sledge is heavier), and a good team will travel from 40 to 60 miles a day. When running, they must be paired with dogs known to each other from puppies; and, should they happen to cross the scent of a deer, so fond are they of its flesh that they sometimes become utterly unmanageable, upset the sledge (or *nartee*, as it is called), and leave the driver, it may be, to perish in the snow.

extreme north about Penjinsk. Otherwise it is fast dying out, as is also the race. In certain parts the people are almost Russified. When Captain Cochrane travelled in Siberia, he surprised his friends by taking home a Kamchatdale wife, but this did not surprise me after meeting at Nikolaefsk, at dinner, a Kamchatdale lady who had married a Russian officer. I saw, too, at Khabarofka, and on the steamer, another Kamchatdale, of less presentable appearance—a cleric, wearing his hair in a queue, perhaps for convenience in travel. He was taken, as a boy of 10 years old, to Irkutsk to be educated; afterwards sent to be minister in a church in Russian America, and subsequently became priest of Okhotsk. He is now near Blagovestchensk, and when I saw him was sick. He looked a poor miserable creature, and was pointed out to me by Baron Stackelberg, of whom he had openly asked an alms, as "*ce pauvre diable.*" He appeared much pleased with some books I gave him, but was altogether about the poorest specimen of a priest I saw in Russia.

The number of the Kamchatdales, strictly so called, is estimated at 3,000. Their capital is Petropavlovsk, the only town on the eastern coast of the peninsula.* The little town points with pride to its two monuments, erected, one to Behring and the other to La Perouse, and its old fortifications, now covered with grass and

* It is situated on the right shore of the splendid Bay of Avatcha, which may claim with Rio Janeiro and San Francisco to be one of the finest harbours in the world. It is perfectly protected from the winds, and, transplanted to a more favourable position, it might be one of the greatest of markets; but since the fishery of the whale in the surrounding seas has lost its importance, Petropavlovsk has sunk from a place of 1,000 inhabitants to one of 500. Mr. Dobell, who lived in the peninsula five years, says that he found there many dykes and mounds, from the existence of which he argues that the country was once thickly populated.

flowers, serve to recall the defeat of the English and French allies, who attacked this village during the Crimean War.

The Kamchatdales are a people of much amiability and honesty. Their houses are always open to the stranger, whom they never weary of waiting upon, and from whom they soon forget an injury.* They have given up, to a large extent, their Shamanism, though they still take care, when hunting an animal, not to pronounce its name, lest they should be visited by ill luck. The Kamchatdales have not the heroic character of their neighbours the Koriaks. Their plaintive songs do not celebrate battles, but love, sledge travels, fishing, and hunting. In their dances they mimic admirably the movements of animals, bounding like the deer, running like the fox, and even entering the water to swim like the seal.

The northern half of the peninsula, and the mainland up to the 65th parallel, are inhabited by the Koriaks, their district extending laterally from the 130th meridian to Behring's Sea, and north of this region to the Frozen Ocean live the Chukchees.†

The Anadir is the one river of this region worth mentioning; but flowing as it does on the polar circle, and near the limit where trees cease to grow, it traverses only solitudes without towns. The Russian

* Their hospitality is carried even to excess. They visit one another, for instance, during a month or six weeks, until the generous host, finding his stock exhausted, gives the hint by serving up a dish called "*tolkootha*," a hodge-podge, composed of meat, fish, and vegetables; upon which the guests depart the following day.

† The Russian calendar gives the following numbers to these peoples: Kamchatdales, 4,360; Koriaks, 5,250; and Chukchees, 12,000. Mr. Kennan, however, doubts this, and thinks that they do not exceed 5,000 altogether.

garrison was obliged to abandon the small fort of Anadirsk, constructed on its banks for a fur depôt, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the Chukchees set it on fire. It is now replaced by four little villages, with a united population of about 200, consisting of aborigines and Cossacks living a half-savage life, though speaking Russ. The Anadir, like the rest of the rivers in the Chukchee and Kamchatdale countries, is so full of fish at the breeding season that the water seems alive with them. When the shoals of salmon mount the river, the water rises like a bank, and the fish are so pressed together that they can be taken by hand. The water ceases to be drinkable, and its smell and taste become intolerable, by reason of the millions of its inhabitants in a state of decomposition.

The Koriaks seem to be related to the Chukchees, and speak a dialect approaching theirs. They are divided into settled and wandering Koriaks, the former occupying themselves in fishing, the latter as reindeer keepers and hunters. Their southern limit in Kamchatka is the village of Tigil, whither they go once a year to exchange their commodities. Travellers do not speak well of the settled Koriaks. Deprived of their herds of reindeer, they have no resource but fishing and traffic with foreign sailors and Russian dealers. The first are said to have taught them drinking and debauchery, and the second lying and stealing. They are eaten up with misery and vice, and are the most degraded of the Siberian tribes. Only the women tattoo their faces, thinking thereby to arrest the ravages of time. Their winter yourts may be classed among the most extraordinary

of human habitations. They are built somewhat like a huge wooden hour-glass, 20 feet high, in the shape of the letter X, and are entered by climbing a pole on the outside, and then sliding down another through the "waist" of the hour-glass, which waist serves for door, window, and chimney. Holes are cut in the logs for climbing, but they are too small for the heavily-clad fur boots of a novice, who has, therefore, amid sparks and smoke, to hug the pole, slide down, and as best he can avoid the fire at the bottom. The interior presents a strange appearance, lighted only from above. The beams, rafters, and logs are smoked to a glossy blackness. A wooden platform, raised about a foot from the earth, extends out from the walls on three sides, to a width of six feet, leaving an open spot 8 or 10 feet in diameter in the centre for the fire, and a huge copper kettle of melting snow, in which is usually simmering fish, reindeer meat, dried salmon, or seals' blubber with rancid oil; these make up the Koriaks' bill of fare. When any one enters the yourt, the inmates are apprised of the fact by a total eclipse of the chimney hole. Among the wandering Koriaks an entrance to the tent is effected by creeping on the ground through a hole into a large open circle, which forms the interior. A fire burns upon the ground in the centre, and round the inner circumference of the yourt are constructed apartments called *pologs*, which are separated one from another by skin curtains, and combine the advantages of privacy with warmth and fugginess! These pologs are about four feet high and eight feet square. They are warmed and lighted by a burning fragment of moss floating in a wooden bowl of seal oil,

which vitiates the air and creates an intolerable stench.

Mr. Kennan gives a humorous description of his first supper among the wandering Koriaks, and their substitute for bread, called *manyalla*, of which the original elements are clotted blood, tallow, and half-digested moss taken from the stomach of the reindeer, where it is supposed to have undergone some change fitting it for second-hand consumption. These curious ingredients are boiled with a few handfuls of dried grass, and the dark mass is then moulded into small loaves and frozen for future use. As a mark of special attention, the host bites off a choice morsel from a large cube of venison in his greasy hand, and then, taking it from his mouth, offers it to his guest.

The wandering Koriaks necessarily move their habitation frequently; for a herd of 4,000 or 5,000 deer (Mr. Bush mentions one Koriak as possessing 15,000 of them) paw up the snow, and in a very few days eat all the moss within a mile of the encampment. This independent kind of life has given to the Koriaks the impatience of restraint, independence of civilization, and perfect self-reliance, which distinguish them from the Kamchatdales and other settled inhabitants of Siberia. They are most hospitable, and the best of husbands and fathers. Mr. Kennan, during his sojourn of 2½ years among them, never saw a Koriak strike any of his belongings. They treat their animals with kindness, and will on no account sell a deer alive. A slain deer may be had for a pound of tobacco. Among the Koriaks the animal costs 10*s*., at Okhotsk from 20*s*. to 30*s*., and on the Amur £5.

Like the Kamchatdales, the Chukchees are obliged

to earn their wives by working a year or more in the service of the prospective father-in-law, and even then the lover may be refused. In any case, at the wedding ceremony he has to pursue the object of his devotion through the pologs of a tent, the bridesmaids doing all they can to facilitate the passage of the bride, and, by keeping down the curtains and whipping him with switches, to hinder the progress of the bridegroom, The lover usually overtakes the maiden, however, in the last polog but one, and there they remain together for seven days and seven nights.

The treatment of the sick and aged in these regions is remarkable, for they put them to death to avoid protracted suffering. I heard the same alleged of the Gilyaks, but it was afterwards contradicted. The Koriaks look upon this as the natural end of their existence; and when they think the time come, they choose in what manner the last office of affection shall be rendered. Some ask to be stoned, and some to be killed by the hatchet or knife. All the young Koriaks learn the art of giving the fatal *coup de grace* as painlessly as possible.

Sometimes the younger request the old to wait a bit; but in any case immediately after death the corpse is burnt, to allow the spirit to escape into the air. Formerly, infanticide was common among them, and of twins one was always sacrificed. None of the Siberian tribes have shown such bravery in resisting the Russians as have the Koriaks and Chukchees, and some of these still retain their independence.

The Chukchee coast extends from Chaunskaia Bay, round Behring's peninsula, to the Anadir river. The fauna of this part of Siberia is richer than in the west.

Probably some of the American animals have crossed the ice of Behring's Straits, and are mingled with those of Asia. The Alpine hare, the bear, the marmot, the weasel, the otter, are common, and wild deer roam in herds of thousands. Snakes, frogs, and toads are not found in North-Eastern Siberia nor in Kamchatka. In the latter country, however, are lizards, which are regarded as of evil omen, and when found are cut up in pieces, that they may tell no one who killed them. The country teems with lemmings, which from time to time migrate in myriads, crossing in a straight line rivers, lakes, even arms of the sea, though decimated on the way by shoals of hungry fish. Travellers are sometimes stayed for hours, waiting the marching-past of these huge armies.*

Many fur-bearing animals in Kamchatka and the Chukchee country have greatly diminished in number since the advent of the Russian hunters, as is the case in the neighbouring seas, where some of the species have altogether disappeared.†

The aspect on the two sides of Behring's Straits is very different. America is wooded, whilst the Chukchee country has no vegetation but lichens and mosses, and from a distance looks completely bare. Among the

* The industrious little creatures store up their grain and roots underground, covering them, *it is said*, before their migration, with poisonous plants, to hinder other animals from eating them. The Kamchatdales, in times of necessity, help themselves to these stores, but do not fail to replace what they take by *caviar*, or remains of fish, that they may not alarm such benevolent purveyors.

† Whalers have now to go much further north for their prey; the sea-otter, with its precious skin, and the sea-lion are rarely seen on the strand and rocks of Behring's isle, and the sea-cow is completely exterminated. The sea-bear, as Réclus calls it, but which I suspect is that we know as the seal, was threatened also with extermination, until the Americans purchased the monopoly of taking them on Russian territory.

flora, however, of North-Eastern Siberia is a peculiar mushroom spotted like a leopard, and surmounted with a small hood—the fly agaric, which here has the top scarlet, flecked with white points. In other parts of Russia it is poisonous. Among the Koriaks it is intoxicating, and a mushroom of this kind sells for three or four reindeer. So powerful is the fungus that the native who eats it remains drunk for several days, and by a process too disgusting to be described, half-a-dozen individuals may be successively intoxicated by the effects of a single mushroom, each in a less degree than his predecessor. The natives dig for roots and tubers, which serve for food or making intoxicating drinks. They eat also the green bark of the birch mixed with caviar.

In certain valleys, especially in those of Kamchatka, the grass exceeds the height of a man, and the Russian settlers make hay three times a year. The culture of cereals is of little profit; oats thrive best. Hemp has been grown, but not in sufficient quantities to replace the nettle as a textile thread. In fact, gardening has succeeded better than agriculture, and now the natives cultivate in hundreds of gardens cabbages, potatoes, beetroot, turnips, carrots, and other vegetables introduced by the Russians in the last century. All these, however, added to their other kinds of food, barely give sustenance enough to the Kamchatdales and their dogs, without which it would be almost impossible for them to leave their huts at certain times of the year. During the four months of summer they must lay up dry fish to provide for eight months of winter, and the normal amount of winter food for a pack of half-a-dozen Kamchatdale dogs is 100,000 herrings. Besides

this the owner's family must be nourished, and hence, if a bad season comes, and the fishing or hunting fails, death is certain; for to the greater part of the natives who have no deer, winter and want are synonymous terms.

It was on the Chukchee coast that the vessel of Professor Nordenskjold—the *Vega*—was frozen in. The ship had continued her eastward course to the 28th September, and had arrived to within a few miles of the open water of Behring's Straits. New ice had, however, begun to form, and the ship had passed into a narrow and shallow channel, where the crew made fast for the night, hoping to disentangle themselves in the morning without difficulty, especially as whalers had sometimes remained in these parts till the middle of October. They were disappointed, however. For at least a month the wind blew from the north, and by the 25th of November the new ice was two feet thick, so that there was no hope of getting free till the following summer. The *Vega's* winter harbour was at the northernmost part of Behring's Straits, a mile from land, and only about two miles from the point where the straits open into the Pacific, for the passage of which a single hour's steam at full speed would have sufficed. This was disappointing to the professor's party, but they built a magnetic observatory, made what discoveries they could in the interest of science, and formed acquaintance with the Chukchees. They describe the natives' tents as kept at so great a heat that the children were usually naked. The women wore only a girdle, and the children sometimes ran from one tent to another without shoes or clothing in a temperature below freezing point.

Some of the party made excavations in the neighbourhood of dwelling-places of a race that was driven by the Chukchees hundreds of years ago to islands in the Polar Sea. The people were called Onkelon. Their houses were in groups, and built, or at least partly so, of whale-bones and driftwood, covered with earth, and connected by long passages with the open air and with one another. The kitchen middens contained bones of whale, walrus, seal, reindeer, etc., together with stone and bone implements, fastened by leather thongs to wooden handles.

The language of the Chukchees and Koriaks has not been reduced to writing, nor do these people attempt to express ideas by signs or pictures. The Russians, however, have attempted something towards Christianizing them, and the first missionary arrived so far back as 1704, though baptism did not become general among them till 1800. Some of the Chukchees, notwithstanding their savage and independent spirit (which has become somewhat softened in the few who have received baptism), are just and honest; and though implacable to an enemy, are staunch and true to a friend. They are only nominal subjects of Russia, and it will apparently take long before the Russian Government can hope to Christianize and civilize them.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE ISLAND OF SAKHALIN.

Geographical description.—Meteorology.—Flora and fauna.—Population.—Cultivation.—Mineral products.—Coal-mine at Dui and penal settlement.—Prison statistics.—Flogging.—Desperate criminals.—Complaints of prison food.—Prison labour.—Difficulties of escape.—Prison executive and alleged abuses.—General opinion on Siberian prisons.—Comparison of Siberian and English convicts.

SAKHALIN (or Saghalien), an island nearly as large as Portugal, was not generally known to be an island until a century ago.* A gloomy interest now attaches to it, because of late years the Russians have been deporting thither a large proportion of their criminal convicts, so that it promises to be the Siberian prison of the future.

As Sakhalin extends over eight degrees of latitude, the climate varies considerably; but at the best, in Aniva Bay, it cannot be called other than severe, for while the latitude is the same as that of Lombardy, the average temperature is that of Archangel. Besides

* This is to some extent indicated by its name, "*Sahalin ula hota*," that is, "Rocks at the mouth of the Black River," in keeping with which idea, on Cook's map of 1784, Sakhalin is but a small islet near the Gulf of the Amur. Other maps, published later, represent Sakhalin as a peninsula. It was left to the Russian Admiral Nevilskoy, 30 years ago, to lay down with accuracy the shores of the island and the Strait of Mamia Rinso, by which it is separated from the continent. Sakhalin is about 600 miles long, with an estimated area of 32,000 square miles, and traversed lengthwise by a mountain chain with craggy summits. The coast is for the

this low temperature, the climate is one of great humidity. At Kusunai, in the south of the island, 250 days in the year are foggy or rainy, and the east coast is worse.

The vegetation of the island resembles that of the neighbouring Manchu mainland, with the addition of some of the species common to the Japanese archipelago, and among them a sort of bamboo, which, attaining to the height of a man, covers whole mountains. Certain American species also mingle with the Asiatic flora, so that out of 700 kinds of phanerogamous plants, not more than 20 belong specially to Sakhalin. The plants on the lowest grounds resemble those of the opposite continent. The mountain slopes to the height of 500 yards are clothed with conifers, and higher are birches and willows, above which are the thick dark branches of creeping shrubs. The animals found on the island resemble those of the continent, and the tiger at times crosses the ice on the Mamia Strait to the northern portions; though no specimen has been seen in the south, nor did the Ainos at the advent of the Russians know that animal even by name.

The population of the island is reckoned at 15,000. To the north are about 2,000 Gilyaks. In the centre are the Oroks, or Orochi—Tunguses of the same stock as the Manguns and Orochons of the Lower Amur;

most part rocky and steep, but opposite the mouth of the Amur it consists of sandy downs. Similar downs are found, too, on the eastern side of the island. None of the mountains reach the line of perpetual snow, but several lift their bare grey summits above the limit of vegetation. The island has two large indentations—one on the eastern coast, called the Bay of Patience, and another at the south, called Aniva Bay; also two rivers, each about the length of the Thames, and some smaller streams flowing through arable valleys. It has likewise three lakes, the largest of which is 50 miles long.

and in the south are the Ainos. These last are thought to have been the aboriginal population, not only of Sakhalin and of the Kuriles, but of the Japanese islands also. They have been driven to their present locality by the Gilyaks and Oroks from the north, and by the Japanese from the south, and the slavery to which the Japanese fishermen have reduced them has contributed alike to their diminution and their moral degradation.*

Judging from a photograph I chanced to procure of an Aino, they have large and wide cheeks, a narrow forehead, and eyes not so elongated as with the Chinese races, and their appearance is more European. The Aino's ample beard and moustache are worthy of a Russian. The Japanese, representing, with the Russians, the "upper classes" in Sakhalin, have established fishing-stations along the southern coast of the island, managed by a population who live there for the season without their families. On the south-eastern shore live 700 Chinese, engaged in gathering trepangs and sea-cabbage. Réclus mentions a trade in this last from the Bay of Paseat, in the south of the province, of £400 in 1864, £13,500 in 1865, £40,000 in 1866. The natives subsist on fish, and eat no bread. I was told at Khabarofka that the Ainos contrive to make an intoxicating drink called *sakhe*—probably that de-

* I am not aware that any efforts have been made for the educational or spiritual improvement of the Ainos of Sakhalin. Veniaminoff reduced to writing the language of the neighbouring Kuriles, published a grammar, and translated the Gospel of St. Matthew, which was printed at Moscow in 1840. When at Hakodate I was informed that the missionaries contemplated work among the Ainos in Yesso, the northern island of Japan, and I found this, on my return, to be desired by the late Henry Wright, Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, but I am not aware that any efforts have yet been put forth for the Ainos of Sakhalin.

THE MILITARY PORT AND PENAL COLONY AT PORT DUI IN SAKHALIN.

scribed by Miss Bird as obtained from the root of a tree—which, to attain their highest notion of happiness, they drink to beastly intoxication. As for the Russians in Sakhalin, nearly all are in the military or prison service, and are supplied with provisions by the Government, the resources of the island being utterly inadequate. I heard that a large proportion of the convicts are employed in farming on a considerable scale, but the cultivation of cereals and vegetables, and the raising of cattle, have not yet, I think, made much progress. Whether they can ever thrive in more than a certain number of sheltered valleys is doubtful.

The Russian military posts are all by the sea. Dui is the principal, situated about the middle of the western coast. On the shores of Aniva Bay are the Korsakof barracks, with a garrison of 500 soldiers. Muravief, near this, is a military post, and its port is perhaps the best, or rather the least bad, in the island; for along a coast of 1,200 miles Sakhalin has not a single harbour where vessels can anchor in real safety.

The island was held for a time jointly by Russia and Japan, and the latter was not altogether disposed to give up her portion; but the importation of convicts soon brought the Japanese to terms, and the Russians are now sole masters. I am not aware that it has any metals, though I heard of a surface iron-mine on the opposite coast near to Nikolaefsk, belonging to Mr. Boutyn of Nertchinsk, which it was said might be worked for scores of years without exhaustion, the mine being similar in character to that which I saw in the Urals. The one mineral production of Sakhalin is coal, of which 70,000 tons were raised in 1878. I

heard the coal spoken of as good, but small. Recently it has been described as "dusty nut-coal, suitable for smithy work, but not for steaming." Coal at Sakhalin costs more than in Japan or Australia. The mines are let out by the Government to a company, which from the first has seen small prosperity.*

The mention of the mines, and of those who work them, leads me to speak of the prisons, about which I have official statistics. I obtained information from several military and naval officers; also from a soldier, a prison officer, and a civilian, all of whom had been to Sakhalin, and most of whom spoke as eye-witnesses. At Dui, it would seem, there are four large prisons. I heard of them, from one who had lived in the island, as insufficiently heated in winter, and over-crowded. Another report, sent secretly by a prisoner to my exile informant, corroborated the alleged want of space. They said, however, that additional buildings were in course of erection.†

The number of prisoners in the island in 1879 was about 2,600; half were reported to be in prison, the remainder comparatively free. The Sakhalin convicts

* It has the right to employ 400 convicts, for which they pay to the Government, says Mr. Réclus, from 9*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per man per day; but I heard that it was at a certain rate per pood of coal obtained. The company are supposed to supply the Government ships with 5,000 tons yearly, if required, at 18*s.* a ton; but in 1878 less than 700 tons were disposed of.

† A traveller writing in the *North China Herald* of August 5th last describing what he saw of the convicts in Sakhalin, says: "They lived in barracks which from the outside appeared to be large, airy, and commodious. One evening we went to one of them, in which about 1,000 convicts were ranged in the courtyard. We passed round the building and saw that, for ventilation and comfort, arrangements of the most complete kind had been made." But I think he speaks of Korsakovsk, south of Dui, where there were in 1881, as I learn from official sources, 450 male and female convicts with their families.

are for the most part murderers, vagabonds, and runaways, there being no "politicals" among them.*

Dui is one of the three places where the authorities may use, in addition to the birch, the troichatka or plète, which I have described (vol. i., p. 92). I have no trustworthy information as to the frequency with which flogging is inflicted. At Tiumen the prison director said that, of 80,000 exiles who had passed through his hands in four years, he had flogged only

* The following list gives, for the five years preceding my visit, the number of persons condemned to hard labour and sent from European Russia by road to the Sea-coast government and Sakhalin, and who, on their arrival, were distributed to Nikolaefsk, Dui coal-mines, Dui farm, and in small numbers to Aniva Bay. It shows the number remaining over annually from the previous year, the number of additions, of departures by death, finished terms, or removal elsewhere, and the number remaining :—

	From last year.	Arrivals	Departures.	Remaining
1874	962	759	1,011	710
1875	710	1,919	1,503	1,126
1876	1,126	2,412	2,039	1,499
1877	1,499	1,494	1,429	1,564
1878	1,564	1,116	988	1,692

Taking a rough average, I find a proportion of 18 women convicts to 100 men. Further details respecting these convicts for 1878 will give some idea as to their crimes. There were sent to Nikolaefsk 476 men and 62 women. Of the men, 98 were removed to Dui, and 378 remained on the continent—300 on the Upper Amur, and 70 in the Primorsk province.

These 378 men were convicted of the following crimes :—

Murder	155	Insubordination to authorities	13
Vagrancy and assuming false names	55	Counterfeiting money	3
Running away	52	Seduction	3
Highway robbery	39	Incest	3
Theft	17	Removing railway irons	1
Robbery with violence	9	Crimes not mentioned	24
Arson	4		

The crimes of the 62 women were as follows :—

Murdering husbands	28	Theft	1
Murdering illegitimate children	6	Highway Robbery	1
Murdering other persons	17	Counterfeiting money	1
Arson	7	Vagrancy	1

one. This, perhaps, is an extreme in one direction. An exile, purporting to give information he had received from a prisoner at Dui, and also translating into French what was supposed to be addressed to me by a Russian soldier from Sakhalin, said that Tuesday and Saturday were flogging days at Dui, and that they flogged from 40 to 50 a week. This, I afterwards learned, was very much exaggerated; and I had strong suspicions at the time that my interpreter was making up a story for my note-book, which he saw me writing. It is, in fact, difficult to know what is the truth, as so much exaggeration has been used concerning the flogging of Russian prisoners.*

I saw at Nikolaefsk the wooden *kobyla*, or "mare," on which the culprit is laid; it is preferable, I should think, to the birching "horse" in the Middlesex prison, Coldbath Fields, though, of course, there can be no comparison between the birch and the plète. The latter is a truly fearful instrument, but it is right to remember that the Russians use it for the more part on such as we should hang outright. Corporal punishment cannot be inflicted in Russia on a free man for a first offence. Only the worst offenders are sent so far

* Goryantchikoff, in "Buried Alive," says a good deal about flogging, but some of his writing refers to the condition of things 50 years ago, and some of it is, to say the least, questionable; as, for instance, he *had heard* a story of an executioner giving 50 strokes or so more than was decreed, because the culprit was stubborn and did not ask pity. When I witnessed a birching at Nikolaefsk, a Cossack stood by, counting aloud every stroke; and when the plète is administered, a medical officer and others are obliged to be present. It is very unlikely, therefore, that a lictor would dare to give 50 extra strokes, even if he wished to do so. But, further, Goryantchikoff says, "400 or 500 strokes of a birch rod are almost sure to kill a man, and 1,000 strokes will kill the strongest man; but the same number of strokes with a cane will hardly injure a man of moderate constitution." And yet I have quoted the case of a soldier at Nikolaefsk birched with 1,100 strokes, who, a fortnight afterwards, saucily declared that he would receive them again for a bottle of brandy!

ast as the localities where the plète exists; and according o the law (Article 808) this punishment is reserved for hose who, condemned to hard labour, have committed urther crime in Siberia, where it would seem there are ıot wanting some desperate characters.

When we passed through Ekaterineburg, for instance, ı horrible incident had occurred only four days pre-viously. A man had entered brandy-shops, ordered drink, and then presented a revolver to the salesmen if hey dared to require payment, and had treated isvost-chiks in a similar manner. He was summoned before the court, but through some technicality got off, and subsequently told one of his prosecutors that he would kill the lot of them; whereupon a number of isvost-chiks set upon him, and wounded him with 30 stabs. Some four or five were awaiting trial at the time of my visit. Again, a murder took place during my stay at Nikolaefsk, at a small drinking-shop in the town, kept by a man and his wife. Two soldiers were in the habit of going there, and at night one said, "Let us go and kill those two and get what brandy we want." Accordingly, very early in the morning, they went, knocked at the door, and, on the man opening it, one of the soldiers stabbed him. The other, after some difficulty, killed the wife, and all but cut off her head. A serving woman narrowly escaped stabbing, but rushed out of the window and told the police. The soldiers were called out, and the two men identified, whereupon they both confessed their crime, and were taken to the guard-house to await legal proceedings, which would consign them, not to death, but to hard labour, it was supposed, in Sakhalin, for 15 or 20 years.

I think the worst thing I heard of Dui was about

the prisoners' food. From two or three independent sources I was told that they did not get enough. For some weeks one year they were reduced to a pound and a half of bread a day, in consequence of an insufficient quantity of flour having been sent to the island, —or, rather, by reason of the ice breaking up that season so late that a fresh supply could not be forwarded. Again, a naval officer told me that he had seen the convicts, when bringing coal to his vessel, pick up and eat the scraps which the seamen had thrown away. I should not think much of this, however, for when I was on board a Russian man-of-war I saw fragments of seamen's biscuit tossed overboard such as any hungry man might well be thankful for, and which, being of superior flour, a convict would naturally relish in preference to his ordinary rye bread.

The soldier who came from Sakhalin told me that the prison fare consisted, on four days a week, of 3 lbs. (Russian) of bread and ½ lb. of meat, and on three days, of 3 lbs. of bread and 1 lb. of fish, which is the quantity of bread allowed to the soldiers there, and exceeds the weight of bread given to English prisoners. It should be added that one of my informants said the prisoners gambled. Cards, with brandy at an exorbitant price, they manage to smuggle into the prison, and then play for their food. Goryantchikoff draws a vivid picture of this practice carried on at night. When all are supposed to be asleep, a piece of carpet is spread, a candle lighted, and a sentinel posted. The card-playing then begins, and often does not cease till morning; and the prisoners, having no money, stake their food and clothes. It is not matter for surprise, therefore, if some of the prisoners find

iemselves with insufficient or very bad clothing, the equent cause of which should be borne in mind in)nnection with the reckless statements sometimes ublished respecting the clothing of Russian prisoners.

Making due allowance for exaggeration, however, I m disposed to think that there is real cause for com-laint regarding the food at Dui, as to quality, if ot quantity.* There are certain local circumstances 'hich would render it likely that the prisoners' food in ie Sea-coast province, and especially Sakhalin, would ot be so satisfactory as in Western Siberia. The cost f provisions is very much higher in the east, and the ;overnment does not appear to allow proportionately ncreased payment.†

Testimony went in the opposite direction as regards

* A civil officer, whom I know, was told of complaints about the food, o which he replied, "What can I do? They now get the supply of fish y contract, and allow so small a sum that I know it cannot be good. I an only bring the matter before my superiors, and, if they do nothing, I im powerless. I cannot pay it out of my own pocket!" Again, a naval)fficer told me that, in taking across provisions to the island, the smell of he fish on board was almost insupportable. The fish, he said, were bad, ind the salt meat bad, though the bread was good.

† Thus I met with a gentleman who was elected director of the local :ommittee for the prison at Nikolaefsk, to whom, for many years, the Government allowed only 13 kopecks per day to provide food for each pri-;oner. The committee petitioned for 25 kopecks a day, and it received 17, at which rate he believed it now stands. At that time 17 kopecks repre-sented about 6*d.* a day, now they represent only 4½*d.* But three pounds of rye bread at Nikolaefsk cost 15 kopecks, and thus there was less than 1*d.* left for other kinds of food. The result, in the case of my informant, was that he often put his hand in his own pocket to the extent of £20 or £30 a year; but it is not likely that many can be found thus to act, especially in such a place as Sakhalin, where there is no colony, and the free inhabi-tants are very few. There is no philanthropic committee there at all, so that the management of the exiles is left solely to the administrative authorities. My informant said that the corn sent to Dui was good, but that the meat and fish were always bad, and that, in fact, the convicts scarcely ever got meat at all.

the prisoners' labour, and all seemed of opinion that they were not overworked. The agricultural convicts, from the great length and severity of the winter, are idle the greater part of the year. The Polish exile said, indeed, that the work was harder than at Kara, and that if the allotted amount of work were unfinished, the miners were flogged; but when the yearly output amounts to only 70,000 tons, it speaks for itself that the getting of this quantity and loading the ships therewith is a mere trifle for 1,000 or 1,500 men; and as in the other penal colonies of Siberia, convicts suffer more, I judge, from inactivity than from overwork. The miners spend 11 hours a day in the mine, from eight to noon and one till eight; and then return to their barracks or houses, not working, a German told me, so hard as English miners. One officer, who had been much in Dui, said that the daily task of a prisoner was not more than he himself could do in a couple of hours of really hard work, and that the men are idle and spin out the work.

Another, in answer to my question, replied that there was no difference perceptible in the general health of the convict miners and farmers; and the traveller I have quoted from the *North China Herald* goes so far as to say, "The conclusion we arrived at was, that contentment prevailed throughout, even the convicts giving no evidence of discontent."

To escape from the prisons of Dui has been comparatively easy, but it is almost impossible to get far away, owing to the scarcity of provisions and the nature of the country; and the difficulty will no doubt be increased when the cable is laid* from De Castries

* Alluded to in the *North China Herald* of August 5th, 1881.

Bay to Dui. From this spot the runaway must first walk 200 miles along the coast, and this through a country where he can get no provisions. He dare not show himself to the natives, since there is a price on his head, and they receive 6*s.* for taking him to the police, dead or alive; and even if he should succeed in crossing the six miles of ice to the continent, he is often compelled to give himself up to get food. Thus, out of 100 who were reported to have run away the winter before my journey, 32 were caught by the Gilyaks, and one case of cannibalism was said to have taken place among the starving fugitives. A terrible instance of the difficulty of procuring food in the Amur region occurred in 1856, when a battalion of soldiers was dispatched in September from Nikolaefsk up the river to Shilkinsk Zavod. They were overtaken by winter, and were compelled to draw lots as to who should be eaten. The survivors walked on the ice and arrived in safety. Mr. Emery told me he had more than once seen hungry runaways give themselves up to the authorities. Runaways when caught are flogged; but this does not prevent others from making the attempt to escape. During my stay at Nikolaefsk a rumour spread that a third of the prisoners landed by the *Nijni Novgorod* had escaped, having in their possession 30 revolvers; and as the small Cossack station on the island opposite the mouth of the Amur had only 15 men, it was feared they would be in a plight. Within a day or two the reported numbers sank to one-half, and I have since learned that 40 was the number—some newly arrived and others older convicts, and that 27 were caught.

With regard to the prison executive, there is a

resident priest in Sakhalin; and since my visit a schoolmistress has been sent for the convicts' children, who are kept in prison. I sent a supply of Scriptures and tracts for the prisoners and soldiers at Dui and Aniva Bay. In the *Nijni Novgorod*, too, there came out a priest and an assistant bringing with them a number of ecclesiastical books. The assistant and books had been sent, I believe, by the Consistorium, from which the priest at Vladivostock, at the time of my visit, was expecting £40 worth of ecclesiastical literature. To every 100 prisoners in Dui there are one superior and two under officers, all of whom are miserably paid. The usual charges of peculation and using for their own advantage the prisoners' work are brought against them; but with what amount of truth I cannot say. The most shameful abuse I heard of concerning Sakhalin was that formerly the female prisoners were allowed clandestinely to go on board the ships whilst coaling, and were expected, on their return, to share with the warders their licentious gains. This came from a prison official, but I cannot answer for its truth; though when I asked a Russian doctor if it was at all likely to be true, he thought it not improbable, and said that he had no doubt female prisoners could, by payment to under officers, get release for an occasional promenade. To what depths of rascality some of the prison authorities may descend, I know not; but one officer, of whom I thought highly, told me that he had been sometimes appointed to inspect Siberian prisons, and in one of them, which he named, he found the director had committed such frauds that, could he have hanged him, he would have done so. As it was, he reported him to his chief, and the man

was removed. On the sea coast they say the heaven is high and the Tsar is far off; and a bribe goes a long way in diverting the hand of justice. For instance, one merchant declared that released convicts had sometimes stolen his goods, but that he could not get them punished because the offenders bribed the police. At Nikolaefsk they testified that one convict, a murderer, who ought to have been fast in prison, was allowed, for handsome payment, the run of the streets; though, like John Bunyan in Bedford Gaol, he was obliged to be in prison when inspectors came. This may be sufficiently shocking to English readers, but not less so, perhaps, the following from nearer home. When visiting one of the largest and best-managed prisons of England, and pointing to the warders in broadcloth, I said to the gentleman conducting me, "Do you think these men can be reached by a bribe?" To which he replied, "I have not the smallest doubt of it; they bring in tobacco and eatables to the cells, and we are powerless to prevent it. A prisoner, for instance, informs his warder as to the whereabouts of his friends, and perhaps asks him to call. On doing so the warder can inquire, 'What would you like me to do for your friend who is under my charge? and what will you give me for doing it?'" A simple-minded woman, in her innocence, came one day to the chaplain of a prison I know, complaining that it "cost her so much to get little comforts to her incarcerated husband"; and then came out the story of the warder's exactions, which at last had exhausted her means and patience!

The reader will have observed that, in speaking of Sakhalin, I have only given the testimony of others, as

I did not go to the island. I entered one prison only after leaving Nikolaefsk—that of Vladivostock, and I may here, therefore, sum up my personal experience of Siberian prisons.

I have met with a deep and almost universal conviction that the prisons of Siberia, compared with those of other countries, are intolerably bad. This I cannot endorse. A proper comparison would be between the Russian sent to Siberia and the English convict as formerly transported to Botany Bay; but, comparing the convicts of the two nations as they now are, and taking the three primary needs of life—clothing, food, and shelter—the Russian convict proves to be fed more abundantly, if not better, than the English convict; and the clothing of the two, having regard to the dress of their respective countries, is very similar. The floors of Siberian cells are not of polished oak, as in Paris, nor are the walls of stone slabs, as in York. Siberian prisons have not fittings of burnished brass, with everything neat and trim, as at Petersburg; but then, neither have the houses of the Siberian people. The average peasant, taken from his *izba* to prison, need experience no greater shock than does the average English criminal when confined in jail. A convict's labour in Siberia is certainly lighter than in England; he has more privileges; friends may see him oftener, and bring him food;* and he passes his time, not in the seclusion of a cell, nor under imposed silence, but among his fellows, with whom he may lounge, talk, and smoke.

I am now looking at things from a prisoner's point

* The best conduct of an English convict would not entitle him to a visit from friends oftener than once in three months, and they may not bring him anything.

of view, and referring more especially to his animal requirements. When we look at his intellectual, moral, and religious nature, then it must be allowed my former comparison, as between Russian and English prisons, no longer holds good. The English convict, if unlettered, is compelled to attend school; the Siberian is left in ignorance. In the case of the English prisoner, some attempt, at all events, is made at his moral reformation. When he enters the prison, and on subsequent occasions, it is the chaplain's duty to see him privately; and having learned, if possible, his moral condition, to point out the cause of his fall, and to show him the way to rise; and these efforts are attended with more success than is known to the general public. Once more, the English prisoner has opportunity of daily religious worship—in some establishments twice a day, religious instruction twice a week or oftener, and this sometimes ends in the happy result that going to prison proves the turning-point of a life.

But I can hardly conceive this happening to a Siberian prisoner. Chaplains, in our sense of the word, are unknown; and even if the criminal be softened at the thought of leaving home or friends, or otherwise, he is turned loose among a herd of sinners more wicked perhaps than himself, with the imminent probability that he will speedily become as abandoned as they. If condemned to hard labour, he is robbed of the Sunday and attendance at church; there is none to point him to higher and better things, and hence he too often becomes a wreck both for this world and the next. Once more, there are in England voluntary agencies meeting the prisoner on his release with an endeavour to minister to his temporal and spiritual good, so that, if he desire

to lead a reformed life, he is helped to do so; and there are hundreds of former inhabitants of our prisons who to-day are respectable members of society. But in regard to the spiritual good of the Siberian prisoner, the Russian system is sadly deficient. The exile, it is true, is settled in a village, in possession of land where, if he chooses to work, he may satisfy his wants, and, as regards material things, begin life anew; but he is known as a convict, and too often does not care to retrieve his character. A doctor, holding a high position in Siberia, told me that he thought the convicts, when released, did not as a rule become reformed. They find difficulty, he said, in persuading peasants to give them their daughters in marriage; and if they marry released female convicts, these have almost always been women of bad character, who bear no children. Hence the men, having no home, often work during the week only to supply immediate wants, and to save enough for a drink on Sunday. Such was his testimony, from which it would appear that Siberia furnishes another illustration of the truth that reformation, to be worthy of the name, except on a religious basis, is impossible.

CHAPTER L.

THE USSURI AND SUNGACHA.

From Nikolaefsk to Khabarofka.—Proposal to move the port.—Military forces in the province.—Departure for Kamen Ruiboloff.—The Ussuri.—Visit to a parish priest.—The native Goldi.—Missions of the Russian Church.—Pay of missionaries.—Head waters of Ussuri.—The Sungacha.—Cossacks.—Visit to a Cossack stanitza.—Chinese houses.—Lake Khanka.—Arrival at Kamen Ruiboloff.

ON Saturday night, August 30th, I left Nikolaefsk for Khabarofka, pleased with the prospect of travelling 700 miles where no English or American author had gone before. By Sunday morning we reached Tyr, and Mariinsk and Sophiisk were passed on Monday.*

As we approached Khabarofka, on Thursday evening, summer appeared to have returned. The small steamer bound for the Ussuri did not start for 24 hours after our arrival, and so I had another day in Khabarofka, which just then was in a state of excitement.

* At all of these places I distributed tracts or sold my books, some of the latter at a shilling each; but the people purchased them so readily that I had not a sufficient supply. In this work I had a willing helper in Captain Stjerncreutz, who in his university days had learned a little English from a lady at Helsingfors. At our stopping-places he usually became the medium through whom I gave a bundle of books to the local priest, to be distributed to the Russians. Some of these priests worked also as missionaries to the Gilyaks. I met one at Tyr, and another, Peter Logimof, at Mikhailofsk. The last told me he had baptized 200 aborigines in seven years.

General Tichmeneff was there, with a commission sent to the Sea-coast government, to consider whether or not it was desirable to move the port from Vladivostock. In early years Ayan, and next Petropavlovsk, was the Russian port in the Pacific; then it was removed to Nijni Kamchatka, afterwards to Nikolaefsk, and from thence, in 1865, to Vladivostock. From a strategic point of view the situation of Vladivostock was considered unsatisfactory, and when it looked possible, in 1878, that England and Russia might go to war, the apprehensions of the authorities were aroused, and some of the foreign merchants of the port, preferring not to run the chance of a siege, decamped to Japan. The question then was whether the Government should spend some £300,000 or £400,000 in the defence of Vladivostock, to make it a military as well as a naval stronghold, or move to another harbour that could be more easily fortified. This was the talk of the province during my stay, and steam, telegraph, and postal services seemed busy in doing the behests of the commission. I caught sight of the general as he and his staff embarked on the *Onon* for Nikolaefsk; and I have since heard that he has been appointed military governor of the province, to live at Khabarofka, whilst Vladivostock continues as the head-quarters of the fleet, and Admiral Erdmann has been recalled to Russia, and is now Governor of the Port of Reval.

I made it my business to call upon Major Evfanoff, the commandant, as I wished to place Scriptures in the barracks, and to give other reading material for distribution among soldiers and Cossacks. At Nikolaefsk I had entrusted upwards of 1,200 books and tracts to Colonel Ossipoff, which he distributed during my stay;

also at Sophiisk I left a parcel of 500 with Colonel Ussufovitch.* The major expressed his willingness to carry out my wishes at Khabarofka, though he did not see how the books could be allowed to lie safely in the barrack-rooms for every one's use. I was therefore obliged to ask him to carry out my intentions in the way that was most feasible, and he subsequently told me that the soldiers were highly pleased, and thankful for the distribution.

Besides the books left for the barracks and hospital,

* I learned that in the Primorsk were 6 battalions of infantry, namely, at Nikolaefsk, Sophiisk, Khabarofka, Sakhalin, Kamen-Ruiboloff, and Vladivostock; and 8 batteries of horse-artillery, namely, at Nikolaefsk, Khabarofka, Sakhalin, Nicolsk, and Paseat. From the "Russian Officers' Handbook," published at Petersburg by the Ministry of War, it appeared that the number of soldiers in East Siberia, in 1878, was 17,610, with 130 guns; namely, 10,640 infantry, 1,300 artillery, 270 sappers and miners, and 5,400 irregular cavalry. More particularly they read as follows:—

Infantry.—Blagovestchensk, 400; Irkutsk, 900; Chita, 300; Stretinsk, 240; Yakutsk, 700; Kara, 470; Kiakhta, 470; Nertchinsk, 470; Sakhalin, 1,100; Olga Bay, 180; Paseat, 340; Vladivostock, 1,000; Kamen Ruiboloff, 1,000; Sophiisk, 1,000; Khabarofka, 800; Nikolaefsk, 800; De Castries Bay, 400; Barracouta Bay, 70.

Heavy artillery.—Chita, 250; Khabarofka, 250; Nikolaefsk, 800.

Field artillery.—16 batteries, of which 8 were in the Primorsk, of 8 guns, having 12 horses to each gun, and 2 mountain batteries.

Sappers and miners.—30 torpedo men and 240 engineers.

Irregular cavalry.—9 Cossack regiments of 600 each.

In war time the Cossacks of the Amur and Ussuri send 6 mounted regiments, of 560 each; 9 foot regiments, of 920 each; and 2 batteries of horse artillery. Of these, 500 are in constant service.

On the frontier service were 2 regiments, each of 400 mounted Cossacks; and 15 companies, of 133 each, of foot.

For the service of the Etape prisons of Eastern Siberia were employed, from the Yakutsk regiment, 400, and the Kamchatka regiment, 200. It is from these last two, I suppose, are supplied the Cossack posts I heard of from Behring's Strait round the Sea of Okhotsk, serving as police, and distributed thus: Anadir, 13; Petropavlovsk, 59; Tigil, 17; Ghijiga, 42; Yamsk, 7; Okhotsk, 32; Ayan, 12; Udskoi, 10.

The following is the constitution of an infantry *regiment*, which is divided into 3 or sometimes 4 battalions, of 1,000 men each, in war time

I did a stroke of business with the merchant Plusnin, selling him a bundle of 250 tracts, hoping thereby to get them distributed; and had not my stock failed, I would gladly have sold to him, or sent to Blagovestchensk, some copies of the Scriptures for the Molokans, who, I heard, are the largest purchasers, as I suppose they are the greatest readers, of the Scriptures on the Amur. Thus, having done what I could for Khabarofka, I prepared to leave it on Friday night, September 5th.

The steamboat agents and officials were exceedingly kind to me, apparently out of regard to what I was doing. A man said at Nikolaefsk that the chief director had been staying with him, and had he known that I was coming on such an errand, he should certainly have asked for me a free passage. As it was, the clerk would not hear of taking anything for the carriage of "the holy books," and a first-class cabin was given for my sole use at a second-class fare, and this was

or on the frontier. Superior officers: 1 commander, 1 adjutant, 1 treasurer, and 1 commissariat. To each battalion 1 commandant, 1 adjutant, 1 treasurer. Each battalion has 4 companies, No. 1 being called "skirmishers," and consisting of a fixed number of 240 men, 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sub-lieutenants and non-commissioned officers, 1 field assistant, and 1 under officer to every 5 men. Companies 2, 3, and 4 have not a fixed number of men, and there is an under officer to every 10 men only.

In the book quoted above appeared the military officers' pay; but they get several additional allowances, everything being provided for them except food. The pay of officers is:—

Generals	from £152	to	£254	per	annum.
Colonels	„ 58	„	103	„	„
Captains	„ 54	„	66	„	„
Staff Captains	„ 50	„	68	„	„
Lieutenants	„ 40	„	60	„	„
Sub-Lieutenants	„ 37	„	54	„	„
Cornets	„ 34	„	51	„	„

repeated on the Ussuri.* The great General Tichmeneff had been the last occupant of my cabin, and it was draped with Brussels carpet, apparently new, the stately proportions of the room being 6 feet long by 4 broad and 7 high, which I feared his Excellency, who was bigger than I in more senses than one, must have found exceedingly small.

The Ussuri, after the Sungari, is the most considerable of the rivers which join the Amur from the south. It flows from the south-west to the north-east in the valley that separates the two parallel ridges of the Shan-alin and the Sikhota-Alin mountains. At Khabarofka it measures nearly two miles wide, having at its mouth three islands and two sandbanks, with an ordinary depth of 10 feet, though after the summer rains it rises to 19 feet. Ascending 25 miles, the width diminishes to a mile and a half, the depth never exceeding 20 feet. The Ussuri was chosen in 1860 for a frontier, so that we now had Russian territory on the left, and Chinese territory on the right. The Chinese bank is for the most part flat, but the horizon is bounded by low mountain peaks. The Russian bank is mountainous and richly wooded, being formed of the western slopes of the coast range, which give birth

* The *Onon*, from Nikolaefsk, was smaller than the *Zeya*, in which I travelled from Kara, but cleaner and better managed. She was about 20 years old, had Belgian engines of 30 horse-power, and carried 5 machinists and 8 sailors. My fare and steward's bill to Khabarofka cost 3 guineas. The *Sungacha*, about to ascend the Ussuri to Lake Khanka, was a still smaller boat, 90 feet long, and drawing 3 feet of water. Her engines were of 40 horse-power, and 15 years old. Towing a barge with third-class passengers and cattle, she could make 5 or 6 miles an hour against the stream, and 8 with it; but without the barge she could go 10 miles against the stream, and 16 with it. I hoped accordingly to accomplish the 500 miles to Kamen Ruiboloff in 5 days, for which I paid as fare 35*s*.

to a number of streams, the Chirka, Bikin, Por, and others, which flow in on the eastern bank of the Ussuri. The largest of the streams flowing in on the western bank are the Nor, Muren, and Sungacha. At the confluence of the Chirka the river is a mile and a quarter wide. For 30 miles further the mountains retire, and the bottom land thus left is richly, though not thickly, wooded with aspens, willows, oaks, and elms. Opposite the mouth of the Por, which flows in on the Russian bank, were a few Chinese houses called Sunchui. We had passed a similar group on the first day's travel, and subsequently came to three others, one of which, opposite Graphskaya, was called Vikul Uima. The right bank was almost uninhabited. Within 70 miles from Khabarofka we passed, on the Russian bank, six stations, and among them Kazakevich (where was a military post, at which I gave some books to Colonel Glen); Dyachenkova, a village of seven houses; and Trëkh-svyateeteley, or the "station of three saints." Another euphonious name was given further on to a collection of houses called Vidnaya, or "the beautiful," where the Ussuri divides into three channels.

On Sunday morning we arrived at Kozloffskaya, or the Goat station, having a telegraph office and a church. Service was over, and I called on the priest, John Voskresenskie (which means resurrection), a man who, if not—

> "To all the country dear,
> Was passing rich on *sixty* pounds a year!"

His parish extended along the river's bank, 30 miles to the north and 50 to the south, and he ministered to

10 villages. To the most distant he goes eight times a year, to the others once a month.*

Most of the houses at Kozloffskaya had gardens, in some of which maize was growing. There was also a private chapel, erected by one of the tradesmen. At the next station, Vasilyeva, the Bekin flows in on the Russian bank, and the mountains here reach their highest.

On Sunday evening we passed a deserted village of 10 log houses, called Pashkova, from which the inhabitants had migrated in a body further south. On the Chinese bank the hills, well wooded to the top, approached the river. In the course of Sunday night we were delayed nine hours by fog, and during the next day stopped for a chat with a steam launch, used, if I mistake not, for the telegraph service. This was the only craft, excepting the canoes of the natives, that we met. Seven stations more were passed, and on Monday evening we arrived at Krasnoiarskaia, having completed half our voyage.

The principal natives of the Ussuri are the Goldi. In addition to what I read and saw of these people, I acquired a great deal of information from Alexander Protodiakonoff, the priest of Khabarofka, who has been a missionary hereabouts for 23 years. At Malmuish

* Help came to me once more from the telegraph station—this time in the person of the wife of the manager, and through her I gave the priest some tracts, but he declined to purchase New Testaments, even at a reduced price; at which I was not surprised when he subsequently told me that he occasionally preached to the people for five minutes on Sunday, but that they complained of the sermons as "too long." What he would not buy, however, the third-class passengers on the barge speedily did, and I then gave some copies to the captain for the use of the passengers of the *Sungacha*, as I had done to Captain Stjerncreutz for the *Onon*.

a missionary, who had 3,000 Goldi in his district, came on board the *Onon*, from whom I gathered that he had been a priest only a year, during which time he had baptized 50 persons. This man called one of the Goldi passengers to explain to me the use of my Gilyak idols.

The Goldi are of the Tunguse family, and belong to the Mongolian race. Their number was estimated by Collins at 2,560, but a missionary gave it me as about 6,000. Their habitat extends along the Amur to the country of the Gilyaks on the north, and on the south to the Upper Ussuri, whilst laterally it extends from the mouth of the Sungari to the sea coast. The mortality among them, as among the Gilyaks, is great, but they are, nevertheless, thought to be on the increase. Their physiognomy is distinctly Mongolian. They imitate some of the customs of the neighbouring Manchus, amongst others that of shaving off the hair, with the exception of a tail, which they wear on the top of the head. They do not, as a rule, cultivate the ground even for garden produce; and such vegetable food as they use, millet or rice, they get in exchange for furs. We did, however, pass two or three Goldi huts where millet was under cultivation, and where the natives looked unusually dirty. Their houses and clothing I have already spoken of as resembling those of the Gilyaks.

Their communications with the outside world are extremely limited. The only foreigners they know are Russians and Chinese. When, therefore, the natives asked who I was, it was exceedingly difficult to make them understand, as they had never seen an Englishman before.* The Goldi, long used to dealing with

* Perhaps it was as well that I had no malformation or physical peculiarity about me, for Prejevalsky relates his meeting a Mongolian who had

GOLDI IN WINTER DRESS.

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the Manchu, still use their money, weights, and measures, also their musical instruments. I was told they do not sing. Each village has its chief or elder, as formerly, under Manchu rule, but they are gradually becoming Russianized. Twenty years ago they used to have drunken fights, village with village, but this practice is now abandoned, and their treatment of the dead is growing more decent; not that they used, like their Mongolian congeners, the interior of their dogs for burying-places, the corpse being cut up and eaten, but they had in each village a house for the dead, which, in summer, stank so horribly as fairly to drive the people away. In these buildings the clothes and arms were placed with the corpse, and children and friends entered from time to time to mourn. A missionary told me he had seen one of these houses within the past 10 years, but that now the Goldi bury their dead, as do the Russians.

I spent part of my last evening at Khabarofka at the house of Peter Alexander, protodiakonoff, or arch deacon, of that town and two neighbouring villages, with a population of 260. He told me that the missionary district he superintended, in addition to his parish, extended from Orlofsk to Ekaterin-Nicolsk on the Amur, and from Busse on the Ussuri to Khabarofka, a river line of about 700 miles. At the time of my visit the priest and his brother were engaged on a translation of the Gospels, and as he did not appear to know how to get it printed, I recommended him to apply to the British and Foreign Bible Society,

seen but one Englishman in his life, who lived at Kiakhta, and who had, unfortunately, lost one of his legs, whereupon the man of the desert had come to the conclusion that all the English had wooden legs!

whose obliging and energetic agent in Petersburg, Mr. Nicolson, had desired me to be on the look-out for new Siberian translations. The Russian liturgy had been already translated into Goldi. The priest gave me a photograph of a group of Goldi Christians, wearing ear and nose rings, and embroidered garments of fish-skin. I set great store by the picture, for it is a rarity. The natives have not yet become vain of their faces, and do not like to be photographed. This group had been taken for the priest who baptized them. In the background is the village starosta, and in front the patriarch of the group, whilst a large number of the other figures are women. I know not whether many of them were the patriarch's wives, of whom, before baptism, he intended to have a sale. If so, he must have been rich, for one of the Goldi, of whom I inquired the price of wives, said that if paid in money they cost from £50 to £70; and if in goods, then from four to seven pieces of "stuff," but he did not say whether it was to be silk, linen, or blue nankeen.

Peter Alexander, the archdeacon, in 23 years up to October 1878, had baptized 2,000 natives; 403 were Orochons (he computed them at 3,000 in his district), and 1,501 were Goldi.*

* Since the previous October he had baptized an additional 50 Goldi, and he thought that what Gilyaks there were in his district were all baptized. Formerly, he said, natives when willing were baptized, though they understood nothing of what was being done, but in his own case he required them to know certain prayers. After baptism they were expected to attend church when there was one near, and to come to communion once a year. I learned that some of the native Christians, as might be expected, relapse into heathenism, especially in time of sickness, when, having perhaps no doctor near, they send for the shaman. It did not appear, however, that the profession of Christianity exposed them to persecution.

I had heard it stated that the Russian missionaries *pay* the heathen to be baptized. One of the missionaries told me that he believed there were priests who gave rewards to their converts, though he had not done so, and he thought it possible that a few natives presented themselves more than once to different priests for baptism, hoping to gain thereby. Another allegation, that of a nobleman, was that the converts were "bribed." But this kind of statement is so frequently made by those who look coldly on mission work that I did not regard it as proven. My informant said that he had seen at Irkutsk that they gave to the Buriats shirts, crosses, and a few roubles; and that often the same Buriats came again for baptism the following year. Also an Ispravnik, interested in the Buriat missions, told me they sometimes gave converts five roubles or so when poor and privately persecuted. Accordingly, I inquired concerning this of the archdeacon, and he explained by telling me that the last 400 he had baptized had received nothing, but that previously each candidate had been supplied, at the expense of the Missionary Society at Blagovestchensk, with a new shirt, a cross to hang on the neck, and an ikon. The reason for this would be evident to any one who knows Siberia. There would be no towns near, where the Gilyaks, for instance, could buy crosses or ikons, and without the possession of these I suppose it is doubtful whether a Russian could be persuaded that he was a Christian at all. Again, the new shirt might represent the chrisom, or baptismal robe; and even if not, the people's ordinary garments (of fish-skin and dog-skin) are so filthy that it would be only becoming that for

once in their lives, at their baptism, they should look decently clean. The Protodiakonoff told me that on his journeys he used to take two or three hundred shirts and crosses, stay in a village for two or three days, and then sometimes baptize as many as 40 at once, especially when he could bring over a rich man, for then the poorer ones followed.

I came, therefore, to the conclusion that the charge of bribery on the part of the missionaries was not well founded; but, on the other hand, it was equally plain, upon their own showing, that the Russian missionaries differ widely from the English as to what constitutes proper qualification for baptism.* I asked the priest at Khabarofka concerning the pay of missionaries, to which he replied that he to whom I had spoken from Malmuish received £25 per annum, and he himself received £30 as a missionary, and 241 roubles 62 kopecks, or about £24, from another source—say £55 in all. Others had represented to me that he received £250 a year; so perhaps this was exclusive of his offerings, which I heard might vary from 6*d.* to £1 for baptisms, and from 6*s.* to £5 for a wedding. Also it is usual to call in the priest after a death to say a "panychid," or office, the name of which suggests a prayer all night long, but which lasts an hour, and for which it is usual to give

* Their work seemed very nearly a repetition of the wholesale baptism at Kief by command of Vladimir, or of the baptisms by Roman missionaries of whole villages at a time. The first missionary whom I questioned thought it enough if, before baptism, the candidates could say the short prayers of the Russian Church; the second appeared content with less than this. Further south, however, I met a parish priest who was not a missionary proper, but who in ten years had baptized ten persons; and in his case he said he had usually kept his candidates under instruction for a year or more.

from 6*d.* up to £1. Offertories, too, are collected each Sunday for the priest, orphans, church, etc., according to the object, for which each of several plates is carried. I gathered that the support given by the natives to their pastors and the church consists of the purchase of candles to the extent of a few pence and an occasional sable-skin. The house and library of the Protodiakonoff did not look as if its owner had an income of £250 a year; but his home was neat and clean, though simply furnished, and his wife and daughters were becomingly dressed. I was glad to hear an excellent report of this missionary, who was said to be a good man and learned. It was his custom actually to preach or read a sermon every Sunday, and he had a crowded church in consequence. I suppose he did not profess that his sermons were all original; for when, on board the *Onon*, he caught sight of a tract I had given to the steward's boy, he immediately seized it, and wrote thereon "for a sermon."

I thought this missionary the most hard-working priest I met in Siberia, and I was very glad to have obtained from him what I consider such trustworthy information concerning the Goldi. The last representatives of this race I saw at the little village of Krasnoiarskaia, 260 miles from Khabarofka, where a man and woman were standing on the banks. The man had a Manchu matchlock with no butt, but having a handle something like that of a pistol. It had a flint and hammer, pulled by a very clumsy trigger. Of the woman I bought her ear- or nose-ring.

On the fourth day, Tuesday, we arrived early in the morning at Busse, where was another telegraph

station. Up to this point we had passed on the river 10 tributaries on the right bank, and 17 on the left. About an hour before noon, we changed our course from the Ussuri to the Sungacha; but, before leaving the Ussuri, I would observe that its head waters are formed by the confluence of the Daibecha and the Ulache, together with several smaller streams. One of them, the Sandugu, rises only about 50 miles from the coast at Olga Bay, and on the banks of the Daibecha gold has been found. I learn, too, from the *North China Herald*, that a few miles from Vladivostock (in what direction is not stated) coal-mines on a large scale are being opened up by Mr. S. Morris, whom I met, if I mistake not, and that they promise to yield well. The Ussuri is navigable several miles higher than Busse, and could a railway be constructed (to which the country offers, I am told, no special obstacle) from Vladivostock to the most southern navigable point of the Ussuri, a means of communication would be made for the carriage of merchandise and passengers, which would be of the utmost importance to the Ussuri valley, the only military and commercial route leading from the Amur to the southern parts of Russian Manchuria.*

On the morning of Tuesday, the 9th of September,

* The entire length of the Ussuri, between 43½° and 48½° N. Lat., is 497 miles. The upper part of the river has a rapid current, and it is swift below the confluence of the Sungacha to the Muren; but for its remaining 300 miles it has a current of two miles an hour only, which is slow compared with the three miles of the Amur, and the four miles of the Shilka. The stream, frequently divided by islands, presents no peculiar difficulties to navigation. Its scenery has a quiet English park-like beauty that never wearies, though it cannot boast the grandeur of the Amur, which combines the beauties of the Rhine and the Danube, and is, taken all in all, the finest river I have travelled.

we entered the Sungacha. It enters at right angles on the western bank of the Ussuri. The Sungacha, flowing out of Lake Khanka, is the largest of the Ussuri tributaries, and the most tortuous river on which I have been. A straight line from its source to its mouth measures but 60 miles, whereas along its channel it measures nearly 180 miles, and I do not think we traversed a single half mile without a bend. Great skill, therefore, was required in steering both steamer and barge. So sharp were some of the curves that, when the former had turned the bend, the two crafts appeared to be proceeding in opposite directions. The steamer at such times slackened speed, but even then, on the first day, the barge twice ran into the muddy bank, and temporarily stuck fast. The Sungacha is from 20 to 60 feet deep, from 100 to 110 feet wide, with a current of two knots. In some parts it is barely 100 feet wide, and in two places only from 8 to 12 feet deep.

Black and turbid as was the water of the Ussuri, it was limpid compared with that of the Sungacha, which was unusable for cooking. A supply of Ussuri water was therefore taken on board, and this implies a good deal, since the Siberians are not too nice in this respect, and are accustomed to the use of river and surface water only. I saw turtles in the Sungacha, and learned that this river, as well as Lake Khanka and the Ussuri, abounds with all kinds of fish, especially carp, sterlet, and salmon.*

* It is said that during the floods, when the Ussuri becomes a series of lakes connected by shallows, the traveller can with his hands, in spawning time, lift off salmon by the dozen from the banks, and in certain confined places may even hear the rippling of the water caused by their fins. The turtles in the Sungacha are eaten by the natives, but not by the

There joined us at Busse a telegraph officer named Adamson, who spoke German, and with whom I was able to employ my smattering of that tongue to good effect. Hitherto I had not exchanged many ideas with my four fellow first-class passengers, one of whom was a veterinary surgeon, and two others Russian and Polish officers. The horse-doctor and the Pole seemed to have no mental resources whatever; and regarding them as types of Siberian "society," it was not difficult to understand the dismal complaint of a physician I met, that he had no congenial companions, there being nothing cared for in the town above the level of wine or cards. These two passengers played incessantly, and, excepting at meals and during sleep, I doubt if cards were out of their hands for a couple of hours during the passage. One night the Pole, even after he had gone to bed, got up to play another game. The captain was very obliging, and gave me a chart he had made of the Ussuri, which is valuable, there being only two original writers, as far as I know, on any considerable portion of this river—namely, Venyukoff and Prejevalsky.*

On the day we entered the Sungacha, we came to one station only—Markova, which was the last collection of houses that could be dignified with the name of village. All the stations beyond were Cossack picket

Russians. They lay their eggs on the margins of the stream, and one our crew amused himself by shooting the animals as they basked in t sun.

* I learned that the three steamers by which I had travelled on t Amur and Ussuri belonged to the same Company, the managing director which receives £1,200 a year. The captain of the *Sungacha* received £ per month, the second captain £10, the steersman £4, the other sailors £ and the machinists from £4 to £5 per month each; but during a la part of the year, when the river is frozen, they have little or nothing to

and consisted of one or perhaps two houses, at which horses are kept for the postal service in winter. There were six of these pickets beyond Markova, making a total of 36 stations between Khabarofka and Kamen Ruiboloff. Among them are four villages only with a church—namely, Kazakevitch, Ilyinska, Kozloffski, and Venyukova, with a resident priest to each of the first three. Among the stations were likewise 21 Cossack stanitzas or settlements, containing from one to a hundred houses each. Also, between Kamen Ruiboloff and Vladivostock are ten stanitzas and three churches. Markova was a Cossack stanitza, and as we stayed there for an hour or two, I enlisted the services of Mr. Adamson, and peeped at Cossack life.

Cossacks of old were warlike people, who lived a free-and-easy life on the border, frequently ravaging their neighbours' herds, whom the Russians reduced to subjection, but left them many privileges. When the Amur came into the hands of the Tsar, it became necessary that the Russian frontier should be guarded, and, if possible, settled. General Muravieff therefore took many of the children of convicts, called them Cossacks, and placed them, together with voluntary emigrants from the Trans-Baikal province, in stations, about 10 miles apart, along the Amur and the Ussuri. Land was allotted to them, and they were supplied with cows, horses, farming-stock, and provisions for a year, after which time they were expected to take care of themselves.* The mounted Cossacks are em-

* It not infrequently happened, however, that they came at the end of the year begging for further assistance, which was given, and the result has been in many cases to make them idle. Captain De Vries told me that he had seen grass and weeds growing six inches high in their corn, which, owing to bad cultivation, stood only six inches higher. Cossacks

ployed to keep the boundaries, and many of the foot Cossacks act as police. When not engaged in service they are free to farm, rear cattle, hunt, or, in fact, turn their hands to what they please, though they are liable to be called up in time of war, almost to the depopulation of a whole neighbourhood.* This accounted for the deserted village of Pashkova, and I learned that the service is not unpopular; for when the Government wanted 800 men wherewith to found a colony on the shores of Lake Khanka, there was no lack of volunteers—a circumstance sufficiently explained by the fact that in such cases they get new farming stock and provisions.†

On the Ussuri the Cossacks are expected to keep off the Chinese smugglers, and even traders, who are not allowed to settle on the Russian bank except under proper restrictions. Cossack habitations, therefore, represent the utmost bounds of Russian life.

Markova consisted of rather more than a dozen

enjoy to a certain degree the privilege of self-government. They elect, for instance, their own officers, who, after a service of 35 years, receive rank as if in the regular army. On the other hand, they have to supply a certain number of fighting men, of whom 10 per cent. must be engaged in active service continually each for two years, and all are drilled for one month in every year.

* When settled in a locality they cannot leave it at will, though, if they can raise themselves to the position of merchants, they acquire greater liberty. Sometimes a whole village is moved to a new colony, and the inhabitants find themselves in a strange district, but with their old comrades and neighbours.

† A Cossack's pay ranges from 10*s.* 6*d.* to 13*s.* a year, which is less than that of infantry soldiers, whose monthly pay I learned at Vladivostock was for recruits, 1*s.* 6*d.*; soldiers, 4*s.*; under officers, 10*s.* 9*d.*; and field assistants, 30*s.*; whilst cooks, tailors, bootmakers, and barbers each receive about 1*d.* a month from every soldier in the company. Every soldier also subscribes 6*d.* a year for religious purposes. Whether Cossacks, when called up, have the same food as soldiers of the line I know not, but the latter in time of

houses, of which only seven were inhabited. I entered some of them, and was struck with their cleanly and orderly arrangement, as compared with the houses of the Russian peasantry. In the first the floor was strewn with hay, the walls were whitewashed, and on one of them was displayed a quantity of table ware, consisting of seven forks, four spoons, and a ladle. On a plate-shelf stood a teapot, slop-basin, two dishes, and four plates, a mug, cup, and two glasses. Near the door hung two bundles of squirrel-skins, and a sheepskin coat, whilst in the corner was a well-known feature in every Cossack's house,—a handmill for grinding corn, worked by the Cossack's wife. A larger mill in the village was turned by horse-power, but with the slender result of grinding only 3 cwt. of meal a day. I saw, too, rope made of lime-tree bark, good for use in the water, and large fish-hooks on which the fish of the Sungacha hook themselves whilst playing with the float. In another house was a Cossack's hunting gun, with a two-legged rest and a flint lock, which is said still to be preferred to more modern kinds. In a third house I bought some hazel-nuts. I had been unable to procure any fruit since leaving

peace have as follows :—Per day 3 lbs (Russian) of rye bread, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. meat, vegetables $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. in summer and 1 lb. in winter; also, per month, 37 lbs. oatmeal, 4 lbs. peas, 2 lbs. butter, $\frac{1}{3}$ lb. sugar, $\frac{1}{6}$ lb. each of brick tea and salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of vinegar. These, too, are the rations of Russian sailors on shore. The clothing for soldiers I learned was as follows :—Yearly, 2 caps, 2 pairs of cloth trousers, and 2 of linen, 2 linen shirts for gymnastics, and 3 for ordinary use, 3 pairs linen drawers, 2 pairs high boots, 1 pair shoes, and 2 pairs of cloth gloves. Every other year, a thick cloth coat, long overcoat, hood, and skull-cap. A belt is expected to last 3 and a set of buttons 5 years. What proportion of this clothing is supplied to Cossacks I do not know. It may very well be that they receive less, seeing that they give to the Government less time and less labour than the ordinary soldiers.

Khabarofka, nor could I succeed at Krasnoiarskaya in getting cucumbers.

After leaving Markova the banks of the Sungacha continued flat, and were all but uninhabited. Our ceaseless windings on the river continued till Wednesday evening, when we arrived at Lon Mayo, on the edge of Lake Khanka, where, on the Chinese bank, were two small houses. They were inhabited, apparently, by men only, and those very dirty. Within the house I entered there was an inner compartment, where, among other objects, I observed a heavy stone for grinding corn, a well-made wicker shovel, and a huge brandy bottle, or cask, made of a sort of coarse *papier-maché*. The building was thatched, and at a distance of two or three yards stood the chimney, constructed of the hollowed trunk of a tree, and plastered with mud at the bottom. In the yard was a cart, with clumsy Chinese wheels, and troughs for cattle, hollowed, like canoes, from the trunks of trees. Bricks, made of mud and rushes, were drying in the sun, and men were busy pulling hemp into threads. In the garden was a small heathen temple, the size of a sentry-box, into which they did not object to my looking. Two poles stood in front, and inside, a table, with a picture over it, a pan and vase, with joss-sticks and some fish-hooks. Not far distant I noticed a field of "buddha" or millet growing, and attempted to approach it by crossing a boggy plot, but was compelled by mosquitoes to beat a speedy retreat. The Ussuri and Sungacha are famous for these insects, as was suggested by the mosquito blinds of the steamer; but a slight breeze and the comparative lateness of the season delivered us.

The Khanka Lake might be called a "Mediterranean," for such is the meaning of the Chinese word 'Khan-Kaï," which the Russians have changed into Khanka, spelt also Khinka, Hinka, and Kenka.* Its superficial extent is more than 1,200 square miles, but, notwithstanding its size and high-sounding name, it is little more than a huge inundation, for its depth is in no part more than seven feet. In early summer one can sometimes walk into the lake, half a mile from the bank, without finding more than 10 inches of water. Hence I had been warned that the steamer might possibly not be able to cross, in which case it would be necessary to proceed 40 miles through Chinese territory, round the north of the lake, by a road on which there is but one post-station, and so to re-enter Russian territory at a point on the north-west shore; for the frontier does not skirt the lake, but crosses it from Lon Mayo, at an angle of 45 degrees. My host at Nikolaefsk on one occasion was obliged to accomplish this journey on the back of a cow. This, however, I was spared, for the thunderstorms of June and July, with the south-east winds, had brought their usual supply of rain, and caused the lake to enlarge, so that it assumed the proportions of an inland sea. At ordinary times the Khanka is divided into two parts, the "great lake" and the "little lake," which latter is also called "the Dobuka." From the captain's chart I calculated it to be 20 miles long by three wide. The two lakes are separated by a sandy strand, of regular proportions, bending towards the north in such a manner as to

* It measures, according to Réclus, 62 miles long, 46 in the widest and 31 in the narrowest part; but the Russian captain gave me its measurement as 67 miles long by 21 miles at the narrowest and 26 at the widest parts.

continue with exactness the curves of the banks from the east and west. This strand, developing its arc with geometrical precision, is only like many others found on the shores of the ocean; but few similar cases occur on the banks of a lake of such comparatively small extent. Such strands, for the most part, are formed when the locality is sheltered from the winds, which do not come regularly from the same quarter.*

I suppose that the water is sometimes rough, for the good-natured captain kindly inquired whether I should be afraid if the boat rocked about. I had not at that time traversed two oceans, but was able to assure him, nevertheless, that I hoped for the best. The windows were as solemnly closed and battened as if we were about to cross the Atlantic; and towards night we steamed into the lake, to find it as calm as a mill-pond. After steering south-east for about 50 miles we arrived, at dawn, at Kamen Ruiboloff, or the Fisherman's Stone, thus finishing a voyage from Khabarofka of 466 miles,

* The Khanka is completely exposed to the winds on the south, which blow during a great part of the year, rushing in through an open gap in the Sikhota-Alin chain. Thus there is found on the surface of its water a regular swell, which is carried from the south to the north, and which delineates with nicety the circular outline of the shore. This is the theory of M. Réclus, and he usually writes very carefully and correctly; but I ought perhaps to add that in the chart given me by the captain this regularity of outline of the north shore is not so observable as in the map of M. Réclus.

For five months of the year ice covers the lake to the thickness of a yard. The north-east and north-west shores are level and wooded. The south-west shore is also wooded, but not so the shores in the south and south-east. Swampy tracts exist at the mouths of the eight rivulets which enter the lake; the Toor-balenkhe flowing in from the north-west, and the largest, the Lifu, from the south. About ten villages and post-stations are dispersed along the shores, and roads lead away to the Manchu towns Ninguta, Hun-chun, and Furden.

or 510 if we had gone to the stations on the shores of the lake.

We had made a quicker passage than was expected; perhaps partly to be accounted for by an "attraction" which no doubt influenced the captain. He spoke a little French, and communicated to me that on the day after our arrival he was to be married to the niece of the merchant Plusnin, of Khabarofka. They have certain domestic and semi-religious preliminaries to a Russian wedding, as I have stated, which I was anxious to see, for we have nothing corresponding to them in England; but unfortunately I missed the opportunity at Kamen Ruiboloff, for although I rose soon after daylight, the captain had fled, and I hastened to proceed, remembering well that the foremost traveller at the post-house gets the untired horses.

CHAPTER LI.

LAKE KHANKA TO THE COAST.

Difficulties in prospect.—Appearance of the country.—Vegetation.—Garden produce.—Medicinal plants.—Ginseng.—Country almost uninhabited.—A serious loss.—Remarkable landscape.—Distribution of animals in Siberia.—Little-Russian settlers.—Peasant affairs and taxes.—Travelling by night.—Arrival at Rasdolnoi.—Clerical functions in request.—War in the post-house.—Summary of tract distribution.—Russia as a field for Christian effort.—The Suifun.—Cheap travelling.—Baptizing children.—Arrival at Vladivostock.

FROM Kamen Ruiboloff I had before me a drive of nearly 100 miles to Rasdolnoi, on the river Suifun, and this comparatively short journey I feared might present greater difficulties than any I had encountered since leaving my interpreter. In towns, or on the steamer, some one could be found with whom to exchange ideas in one of the three principal languages of Europe; but now I was to go alone through a district where even Russians are comparatively strangers, and where, if my half-dozen words of Sclavonic failed, I expected to be quite at a loss in communicating with the Manchu. Besides this I had heard uncomfortable accounts of the Manzas, Coreans, and other congeners of the Chinese, many of whose culprits had been expatriated to these regions as to a Botany Bay, and were giving the authorities trouble, not from political causes, but by forming themselves into banditti and plundering Russians and Chinese

alike. At Khabarofka Major Evfanoff informed me that quite recently a number of these robbers had committed depredations on the Russians, and that Cossacks were gone in search of them. I also heard further on that they had entered an officer's house, murdered his wife, hung her up by the heels, and carried away her child. Again, tigers were said to infest the district.*

I was so delighted, however, with the thought of reaching the coast, and with the hope of getting from thence to Japan, that I hastened to depart notwithstanding. A letter of introduction had been given me from Nikolaefsk to Colonel Vinikoff, stationed at Kamen Ruiboloff, and the prospect held out that he would perhaps show me the wonderful manœuvres of his cavalry Cossacks; but, hearing that he was away, I contented myself with sending to him by the captain of the steamer a letter, and a box of books for his men, and by 8 o'clock I was ready to start. The weather was charming, like that of a sunny English September—a morning without clouds.

The district through which I was to travel, south of Lake Khanka, is about 100 miles from north to south, and the Chinese frontier is a few miles west of the post-road. Extensive plains constitute a prominent feature of the country, which is sufficiently hilly, however, to render the landscape pleasing. The soil, loamy and black, is covered with rich vegetation. These Manchurian plains are like enormous limitless meadows and heaths, from which the herbage has

* The merchant Plusnin had on one occasion been attacked in his sledge by one of these animals; and Mr. Emery told me that, when a tiger had been seen on the road, he had sometimes found it very difficult to make the post-boys set out on a journey.

laid on ulcers as in Peking, wounds are covered with agaric, the root of "Solomon's seal" is applied for pains in the throat, and that of the hand-shaped bulb of an orchid for ulcers. The Goldi, however, as I have said, often attempt another method of cure, by making a wooden model of the part afflicted, which they carry about; but authorities do not record the comparative values of the two modes of treatment. It is said that the enlightened portion of the native community despise vegetable medicine, and more frequently resort to the services of the shaman and his brandy-drinking performances, which no doubt are popular with all parties concerned.

On leaving Kamen Ruiboloff the country was almost uninhabited. On the first stage I met one vehicle and three men, but passed not a single house. On the second stage two men only were seen.* On arriving at the fourth station—Dubininskaya—I discovered that I had lost a large pocket-book, or paper wallet, in which were my most valuable documents, including the letter from the Minister of the Interior, my podorojna, and

Chinese count it as valuable as gold, and give up to £40 per lb. If, therefore, these prices be paid to those who find it, no doubt it is very expensive when sold in China, where no chemist's shop is without it. The root is straight, spindle-shaped, knotty, and up to half an inch in diameter, and 8 inches in length. The leaves are cut off, and the root is boiled in water, apparently to remove some injurious quality; and when it has undergone fitting preparation its colour is a transparent white, with sometimes a slight red or orange tinge; its appearance then is that of a stalactite. It is carefully dried, wrapped in unsized paper, and sent to market. On the Ussuri it is used, boiled, for cold, fever, headache or stomach-ache.

* The first three stations—Mo, Vstrechni, and Utosni—were single post-houses, with no other habitation in sight. The accommodation was of the poorest; the couch at Vstrechni consisting of three boards, and the table-cloth of linen tick. I gave the children some nuts, but not one said "thank you," and none could read.

CHINESE MERCHANTS IN THE PRIMORSK IN WINTER COSTUME. Page 633.

other official papers. This alarmed me, for without the podorojna I could not claim post-horses to go either backwards or forwards; and the situation was the more serious because none of the post-people could speak anything but Russian. I made them understand by signs that I had lost my letter-case, and that I must go back with the yemstchik to see if I had left it at the previous station. Giving my heavy luggage in charge to the post-mistress at Dubininskaya, I mounted the returning vehicle. It was now nine o'clock, and quite dark, and I journeyed in anything but a pleasant mood. I remembered, too, with appreciation, the luxury I had had further west, in Mr. Cattley's tarantass, for here I had nothing but a wretched post-tumbril, without springs, seat, or hood. One of the horses went lame, which retarded progress, and I lay on my bear-skin, with only a shawl to cover me, for six hours of the night, gazing up into the heavens. The moon arose in her beauty, and the number of stars visible might have delighted the eye of an astronomer, but I could think of nothing but my loss. At three o'clock in the morning we reached the station, where they knew nothing of the pocket-book, and where the guest-room was occupied by a Chinese packman and his assistant, with whom I did not at first relish passing the remainder of the night. One, however, got off the bedstead and offered it me, and the other wished to give me tea, which, to say the least, was civil. So I spread my bearskin on the wooden couch, and the candle was extinguished. In less than two minutes I had kicked out the tester-board of the rickety bedstead, and it came down with a clatter, causing my room-fellows to start. "*Ladna! ladna!*" said I, thinking this was

the Russian for "all right"; and then we recomposed ourselves. On awaking, and after further search, I ascertained that my difficulties were increased, for I now discovered, to my dismay, that beside the important papers alluded to in the wallet, there were also two volumes of manuscript notes, taken in coming across Siberia. I was now in an agony; and if crying would have availed I could well have done it, so distressed was I at the thought of losing information that had cost so much. It occurred to me that I might have left the wallet at the station still further back, and, seeing a Cossack saddle in the post-house, I pointed at it, intimating that the yemstchik should mount, and ride courier to inquire for the lost treasure. But he did not welcome the task, though he intimated I might have the saddle if I chose to go myself. Thinking to quicken the post-master into further exertion I offered a reward of five roubles if the book could be found. Meanwhile the two Chinamen evinced great kindness and sympathy with me in my loss, and the more so when they discovered I was an Englishman. At breakfast they offered me rice and onions, and I returned the compliment by inviting them to partake of bread and jam. They were travelling to Kamen Ruiboloff, and offered me a place for two stages in their vehicle. I resolved at first to go back, but afterwards determined to send a note by the Chinamen to Colonel Vinikoff, asking him to make inquiries for the wallet, and then continue my way, and to look very narrowly on the road for what I had lost. The yemstchik was not a good specimen of his profession, being fonder, if I mistake not, of drink than of work, and my slender knowledge of Russian led me to suspect that he was

ongratulating himself on the extra money he was ex-
cting from me, which, in my suppliant condition, I
vas ready enough to pay if only the books could be
ound. At last we started, and I was scanning the
oad with the eyes of a lynx when about a mile from
he station we met a post-vehicle, in which was a lady
raveller whom I had seen the previous evening at
Dubininskaya. We pulled up, and she placed her
hands at distances apart, showing the length and
breadth of something that had been found, and spoke
to the yemstchik, from which I was able to make out
that my troubles were over. I clapped my hands, and
pushed forward with a light heart to the station, and
there was my wallet, well hauled over, but with nothing
missing. The yemstchik had told a peasant of my loss,
and of the promised reward, and he had found the
article lying in the road. I then remembered that, in
the cool of the evening, I had put on my ulster, stand-
ing up in the conveyance, without stopping the horses,
and so had jerked the wallet out of my pocket. Never
did I pay ten shillings with greater pleasure than to
the finder, after which I set forward, truly grateful, and
prepared with reanimated spirits to enjoy the prospect
before me.

Leaving Dubininskaya, the post-road lay over a range
of low hills, the top commanding a view such as I had
never before seen. The distant horizon was bounded
by pointed hills, and between were enormous plains of
tall, brown, luxuriant pasture, waving like fields of corn
—a land of plenty, at all events, if not flowing with
milk and honey. No cities were visible, nor a human
being, nor a habitation. There were just one or two
spots where the grass had been cut and piled in heaps.

but the abundance that remained seemed to mock such puny efforts. The hills were wooded with oak, and the plains with aspens, elms, lime trees, ashes, black and white birches, maples, and walnuts.* In young forests of this district are vines, roses, and a great many lilies. In the grass land there is much wormwood and pulse, the marsh ranunculus, and field-pink-clover. This last I saw in such abundance as to remind one of an English clover-field. There were also wild sun-flowers, and, growing at the roadside, wild millet, and what looked like bastard wheat or darnel.

Nor is this richness confined to the vegetable kingdom. To the 20,000 sable-skins sold annually at Khabarofka, Southern Manchuria contributes its quota; but I heard more of its abundance of deer, the flesh of which sells in Vladivostock in winter from 1½*d.* to 2*d.* per lb.† Wild turkeys are found in the district. Ducks and water-fowl we caused to fly up without number on the Ussuri, and pheasants, like those in England, rose before me as I drove to the south. At the station I was now approaching, woodcocks cost from 10*d.* to 1*s.* each, riabchiks or black grouse 5*d.* each, and pheasants

* Mr. Ravenstein speaks of the walnut of the Ussuri as seldom bearing fruit, and he suggests that the whole growing power may be absorbed by the trunk and leaves; but I saw walnuts on the trees at Khabarofka, and, when speaking of them to Baron Stackelberg, heard nothing of their failure in fruit.

† The Chinese employ men in the interior to slaughter these animals, simply for the sake of their antlers. These soft horns are exported yearly to China in large quantities. Captain de Vries told me that on one occasion he carried on his little schooner a load of them to the value of £2,000, one extra good pair being worth £60. Erman states that the jelly made of these horns is much esteemed by Chinese gourmands, whilst Ravenstein quotes their medicinal use by the Chinese as a remedy in female diseases. A Russian doctor, to whom I spoke upon the subject, however, knew only of their general sedative properties, the jelly being used, he thought, as a comforting medicine in weakness.

6*d.* each. So plentiful were pheasants in 1875, that they could be bought for 7½*d.* a brace, and at Paseat for 2½*d.* each.* This was in strong contrast to what the telegraph inspector told me of the prices of butchers' meat at Vladivostock. He had been asked nearly £3 for the half of a calf, and beef, he said, cost 5*d.* per lb.

I now and then saw large herds of cows grazing, and learned that in 1878 there were imported to the Ussuri districts 80 horses, 600 sheep and pigs, and 1,000 head of cattle.

On arriving at the next station, Nicolsk, there was a good-sized village, with a church, barracks of the 3rd Ussuri battalion, and, what was better to me, a telegraph station. It was now Friday afternoon, and I was anxious, if possible, to reach Vladivostock on the following day, so as to be ready for Sunday. I had heard that they had been building there a Lutheran church, and it was suggested to me at Nikolaefsk that I might open it, as there was no resident pastor. I

* How long this abundance of game will last is an interesting problem, for it is a well-known fact, says M. Réclus, that the distribution of animals over Siberia has been markedly affected by the advent of Russian hunters. The region of the reindeer, for instance, ought to impinge upon that of the camel; and the reindeer used to be found on the mountains of Southern Siberia, but it now runs wild only in the low forests and tundras of the north. The argali, or wild sheep, is no longer found in the plains and mountains of Siberia, as it was in the last century, but has fled southwards into Mongolia. The antelopes and wild horses, driven from the steppes of the Gobi by cold and lack of pasture, descend in troops in autumn towards the plains of Siberia, followed by tigers and wolves, and hunted by men; and the slaughter lasts till the spring allows their return to the solitudes of Mongolia. Neither animals nor birds need a map to show them the frontier of the two countries. It has been remarked that the same birds which permit a stranger to approach them without fear in Mongolia, flee in terror at the least noise on Siberian soil. Especially is this the case with water-fowl, for the Mongols never allow birds to be shot upon the sacred element, believing that, if the blood of a bird mixes with the water, the flocks that drink it will speedily die.

knew also that steamers served on the Suifun only for the mail service, and that when travellers required a passage, a telegram had to be sent to the Governor. I had heard that he was absent; but as his wife spoke English I telegraphed from Nicolsk, and said that if I could reach Vladivostock in time I should be happy to conduct a Sunday service. In the telegraph office I met Captain Alexander Jdanoff, to whom I gave some reading material for his soldiers, and then went to the post-house.

I noticed in several of the houses at Nicolsk that the chimneys were built of lattice work like English hurdles, plastered with mud. These erections told a tale to those who could read it, the builders being emigrants from Little Russia. So long as serfdom continued, the Russian peasantry were rooted to the soil, and often in great poverty;* but when the serfs were liberated they came in some cases to the Government in numbers, and said, "We are poor; please send us to colonize in Siberia, or make us Cossacks." And the Government, desiring to populate the Ussuri, had sent them hither, freed from taxes, and with the usual privileges granted to colonists.†

* A lady in Petersburg told me that the peasantry near her country house live for a large part of the year almost without bread, weave in winter by the dim flame of a piece of lighted wood, and often go to bed supperless. With a sufficiency of rye bread all the year round they think themselves rich.

† I heard on the Kama in European Russia, from a Belgian, that whereas he, as a foreigner, was free from taxation, having to pay only 1*s.* 3*d.* a year for his passport, some of the peasants have to pay as much as 28*s.* Servants of the Crown, including priests, pay no taxes, though their children begin to do so at the age of 21. In Western Siberia no man (except convicts deprived of all their rights) is free from direct taxation, the manner of collecting the tax being similar to that followed in Russia. A census is taken every 20 years or oftener, and a number of

The telegraphist at Nicolsk strongly advised me to push on to the Suifun without delay, so as that night to reach the steamer, which was to leave Rasdolnoi early on the morrow. I therefore started after tea for a drive of 14 miles, the first stage being to Baranofskaya, or the "sheep" station. On arriving I thought more of wolves than of sheep, and of tigers than either. The post-house was in the middle of a wood, and near it were burning large fires to keep away the mosquitoes and, as I supposed, beasts of prey. It was now night, and I certainly should have preferred proceeding by day; but I remembered the advice just received, and told the men to put to the horses. A sailor youth, travelling to Vladivostock, apparently on foot, and

villages are classed together into a *mir* (a world), from which a certain tax has to be raised. The *mir* settle among themselves in a kind of local parliament the proportion each family shall pay, and then, whether the members of a family increase or diminish, this fixed proportion goes on till the next census is taken. This causes great inequalities. Thus a father with a large family will be made liable for a large sum, which, so long as he has children at home to work, he can pay; but should his sons be drawn for soldiers, or be cut off by death, he is in a different position; though, on the other hand, a man with a family of small children at the time of taking the census is lightly taxed, whereas, when his children grow up and work, he could well afford to pay more. In European Russia the census is taken every seven or nine years, and the tax to be paid by each family is revised oftener.

Each village receives land according to the number of its inhabitants, but so that each "soul," or able-bodied male or head of a family, gets about 15 acres, a space which, properly cultivated, should suffice for his support; but if not, land in the Primorsk government costs only 2*s.* an acre; in fact, at Nikolaefsk, the government *gave* land under certain restrictions for building, and up to 1875 charged no property-tax, nor even for licences during the first ten years of Russian occupation. When this land has been allotted to a man in Russia with its accompanying tax, he cannot get quit of the bargain so far as the tax is concerned. Should he find the land unprofitable he may give up its cultivation, but he must continue to pay the tax, and hence it often happens that a man leaves his commune and goes to a neighbouring town for employment, but still pays taxes for the land in some remote village he has left.

speaking a few words of English, made himself officious on my behalf, and then wanted to be allowed to mount my vehicle. It was too dark for me to see what he was like, but I consented, thinking that if we did have any encounter with wild animals or robbers, it might be an assistance to have some one who understood if only a word or two of my mother tongue. I sincerely hoped that we should not meet a supperless tiger, though I think I should have been really uneasy had I known what I learned on the morrow—that several of these animals had been killed during the summer at the very village to which I was going.*

It was nearly midnight when we reached Rasdolnoi. On the way my fellow-traveller showed that he had been drinking, and his stock of English words proved to be very small and by no means choice. I went to the telegraph office and ascertained that the steamer, lying a few miles off in the river, would leave at seven next morning; accordingly, I took up

* In the early days of the Russian occupation tigers used to come into the town of Vladivostock, and my host had a horse eaten by them. His young boy once came home saying that he had seen "such a pretty calf, but that he could not hold in his pony, such haste did it make to get away. Sixty-five tigers were said to have been killed in the district the year before my arrival, and Captain de Vries told me that on the road by which I travelled he was proceeding, early one morning, with a farmer and his dog, when the royal beast appeared on the road a few yards before them, at which they shouted, and the animal retired into the forest. They went forward, the dog preceding them, whereupon the tiger sprang out and seized the dog and bore it away. The farmer began to mourn his loss, but the captain said, "Why, you donkey! if the tiger had not taken the dog for his breakfast he might have taken *you!*" I heard these things, however, *after* my journey; and the only tangible reminders of tigers I saw were some of their skins, offered at Khabarofka and Vladivostock from £2, for that of a cub, to £5 for those of full size. Prejevalsky speaks of the tiger of the district as being equal to the royal tiger of Bengal, but, judging from the skins I saw, it is not so handsomely marked.

my quarters at the post-house, and at midnight was writing up my diary when, the news having spread that a clergyman had come, a Finnish shopkeeper, named Rosenstrom, presented himself and asked if I would baptize his little girl. The request came at an awkward moment, for I had ordered the horses for five. At half-past three, however, I sallied forth, arrayed in my cassock, with the Finn to conduct me, lantern in hand. His house was not far, though approached by a rough road; and, passing through the shop, I found a room nicely arranged and brilliantly lighted, with some half-dozen persons present—the telegraph officer and his wife or sister (who had communicated my arrival), and a Finnish friend, besides the father and mother of the child. After the service and breakfast, dawn appeared, and by five I was ready to depart. Much to my chagrin, however, the smoke from the funnel, among the distant trees, showed the vessel to be moving, and I was left behind. I telegraphed to Vladivostock to this effect, and received a reply that the steamer would return and bring me on Monday morning.

I had abundance of time, therefore, to inspect the little station of Rasdolnoi.* Had I not felt impatient at losing the boat, I might have enjoyed the view from the post-house, for it was exceedingly pleasing.

* It being the furthest navigable point on the Suifun from Vladivostock, the Russians in the early days of their occupation had posted soldiers here and built barracks. They subsequently removed the military to Nicolsk, and with them had migrated all the inhabitants except Mr. Rosenstrom and the people at the telegraph-office and post-house. There were plenty of log-houses still standing, to one of which my attention was directed, and I was told that my informant had purchased it for 10*s.*—the cheapest house I had ever seen. Mr. Rosenstrom and his friend, I discovered, were of the party of Finns who had come

The country was well wooded, and the curves of the Suifun added much to the beauty of the picture. It was in this post-house, and only here, that I had a desperate battle with thousands of cockroaches or *tarakans*. By day they hid themselves, but at night they came out on to the table, the couch, and everywhere, great grandfathers and grandmothers with their offspring to the third and fourth generation. To wage general warfare against them was hopeless; therefore I set my wits to work to keep the table free. I recalled a visit paid to Messrs. Huntley and Palmer's Biscuit Manufactory at Reading, where, on the floor, were thousands of little insects running about. Let no lover of Huntley and Palmer's biscuits, however, be dismayed, for none of these creepers are allowed to mount the tables, the legs being made to stand each in a little pan of water; and as the emmets will not take to swimming, they have to be content with the crumbs on the floor. This plan I adopted with modifications. My friends had strongly urged me to take from Petersburg a box of Persian powder, supposed to be an abomination to B flats and F sharps. I had not used it once, but now I surrounded each leg of the table with an embankment of the said powder, and great was my delight to see the enemy advance, evidently thinking to scale the ramparts and mount as usual, but, instead, suddenly stop, hold a council of war, wave feelers, and then beat a retreat!

to these parts to catch whales, so that he knew Captain Stjerncreutz with whom I had travelled. I was puzzled to know how a living could be made from a tiny shop near which there were but two inhabited houses visible, but I found that a small trade was done with travellers passing to and from Vladivostock, by hawking, and with workmen building a shed at the river side.

I was enjoying my tea on Saturday afternoon from a clean table when two officers, a wife, and child arrived from Vladivostock. Then was cleared up the mystery of the boat having left so early; a telegram had been sent that it should depart at five to meet these travellers, one of whom was merely accompanying his friends for a few miles in Russian fashion, and was to return next day. They spoke French and a little English, and, having started in a hurry, they asked if I could sell them some quinine, which I thought I might venture to do, seeing that I had not once opened my store. Arnica had been needed for the sprain of the interpreter's foot, but as for myself I am not sure that I had taken so much as a pill since leaving London, so that the counsel of my medical adviser had proved to be sound; for when I proposed to take a lot of medicines, he strongly urged me not to carry too much, "lest," he said, "you should be tempted to excess."

Though Rasdolnoi was so small a place, yet, when it became known that I had good books in possession, several came from I know not where to buy them. I now had time to reckon up my "takings," and found that sales amounted in all to about £18—not a large sum truly, but a good deal to make up in kopecks, of which 100 equal only 2*s*. My receipts covered, I suppose, about a fourth of the cost of the transport of books and tracts, and as these had been given me, with grants toward their carriage, by the Bible and Tract Societies of London and Petersburg, I subsequently divided among them the proceeds. From Nikolaefsk I sent to the Governor of the Primorsk 1,000 New Testaments, 10,000 tracts, and 200 copies of the "Life of Christ," requesting that they might be distributed from

Vladivostock to Kamchatka, to the prisons, hospitals, soldiers, Cossacks, schools, and the seamen of the Siberian fleet; and it has gratified me to hear, during the present year, that this was thoroughly and carefully done. Thus I distributed in all by proxy—that is through the authorities—about 44,000 publications, and personally about 12,000, the exact total being 55,812 of all kinds.*

On my return to England I wrote to the Director of the Central Administration of Prisons, saying what I had done, and enclosing a list of the persons to whom and for whom the books had been given. I also stated my "strong conviction that a wider and better knowledge of the Holy Scriptures would do much both to lessen crime and also to reform the criminal. Hence I wished that a copy of the New Testament might always remain within reach of every prisoner and hospital patient in Siberia, and I cherished the hope that some who might perhaps take up the book to while away time might read to profit and subsequent reformation." To this end I asked the administration to do anything they could to forward the successful completion of my work; and this letter I enclosed to the Minister of the Interior, when writing to thank his Excellency for the great kindness and attention his letter had secured for me.†

* The governors of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Akmolinsk, and Semipolatinsk, of Yeneseisk, Irkutsk, and Yakutsk, were requested to apportion the Scriptures to prisons, hospitals, poor-houses, and similar institutions, and to disperse the tracts in schools, as widely as possible. The governors of the Za-Baikal, Amur, and Sea-coast provinces, in addition to this, were asked also to distribute extra supplies to the army, navy, and Cossacks.

† I would take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Religious Tract Society of London and its colleagues in Russia for the gracious way in which the Committee has always accepted my offers of service,

My "work" was now almost done, and I looked orward with hope, for I regard the Russian people as resenting a promising field for the diffusion of a more piritual religion than they now possess. Many, it is rue, do not cease to speak of Russian bribery and ntruthfulness, gambling and dishonesty. But, how-ver that may be, there seemed to me to be a general illingness in Russia to learn better things. The ceptics we met were few and far between. In Western iberia a Polish veterinary surgeon—a Romanist—rgued as if he would like to upset Christianity, but e ended by giving money for a New Testament, and cknowledged that he envied the experience of his ntagonist. In Eastern Siberia I met a Protestant entleman who said that most educated people in iberia were materialists; but I had afterwards reason o suspect he was measuring by his own bushel, for o material was his creed that, though holding a high osition in the Government, with a large salary, he

and for the kind manner in which I have been trusted to act in concert with their local agents as seemed best on the occasion. Not a little of my success (if it may be so called), especially in Russia, has been traceable to this; and my holiday distribution of more than 100,000 of their publications, I hope, I shall always remember with gratitude and pleasure. An extensive work is done in Russia by the Religious Tract Society. About 1,000,000 tracts were sold from 1875 to 1878, which is an indirect testimony that we hold more truth in common with the Russian Church than many are aware of. In Russia, as is well known, every book, every pamphlet, every leaflet, before it can be published and circulated, must receive the approval of the censor; and if the doctrine of what is printed, whether political or religious, be objectionable, its publication is forbidden. Further, it is pretty well known what kind of doctrine, and what kind only, the Committee of the Religious Tract Society approves. Hence, if these two things be put together, and it be remembered that tens of thousands of tracts are circulated in the empire which the Committee approves, and to which the Synod does not object, then surely it is pretty clear that the Russians and ourselves have in religious matters a great deal of common ground.

was not above suspicion of asking a bribe. I ought, however, to add that a Russian critic, by no means unfriendly, lamented to me that, owing to the want of teaching power in the priests, men of the educated classes in Russia are, as a rule, perfectly *indifferent* to religion, and therefore tolerant to all and every creed, though jealous of the orthodox Church as a national institution.

A good type of a religious gentleman—a devotee perhaps some would say—was an officer I met, who goes to mass every morning at five; or, again, a lady of high rank, who, whilst continuing strictly "orthodox," learns to look at the errors of her Church in their least objectionable form, and to separate the good from the bad. Another educated man, an advocate, was typical, I should judge, of many in his rank of life. All are required to attend church on certain occasions, and beyond this he acknowleged that he did so very little; but it was because he got no teaching there. He went, he said, on the festivals, from six to twelve times a year, and oftener whilst his children were young; but he was ready to go every Sunday if something could be learned thereby. As for the uneducated Russians, the distances they will go, amounting to literally thousands of miles, for religious purposes, manifests at least something intensely earnest about religious affairs. Never—certainly, in any other country—have I met with such eagerness to get Scriptures and good books. This extends to both clergy and laity. When, on one occasion, my friend who edited the *Russian Workman* thought of giving it up, some of the priests sent their subscriptions again, and implored that it might be continued; and some of those interested in the

ligious societies at work in the empire have told me iat, in spite of the obstacles put in their way, they ave far more opportunities of usefulness than they in use. I agree, therefore, with those who look upon ussia as a promising field for Christian effort.

On Sunday afternoon the officer returned to Rasolnoi, and I began immediately to question him. here was no ship sailing to Japan, he said, for a fortight; and then, by way of preface to information especting Vladivostock, he asked my standing, and hether I was rich or poor. Having classed myself ith those who have neither poverty nor riches, he aid that, as for himself, he was a man of means, and hat he took the journeys to the Caucasus and Egypt of which he had told me) because he had money in ocket, and so on—tall talk which sank down wonderully when I searched him out at Vladivostock.* He ppeared well posted, however, in his professional tudies, and willing to give me information; so, as we were to start very early in the morning, we boarded

* My travels in Russia have led me to the conclusion that in the interior of that country it is not always wise to be too modest about divulging one's income. An English officer in plain clothes, passing lonely through Kiakhta, was asked by a merchant, who had shown him some attention, what was his income; whereupon the officer told him that of a captain of Royal Engineers in full pay on foreign service, which greatly astonished the Siberiak. He said he would mention it to the chief man of the town, who, he felt sure, would call upon him. And so he did, and the captain received a marked increase of attention. Again, before starting last year for the Caucasus, I was told of the potency there of wearing arms and insignia of office, and of the difference it makes at the post-stations in getting horses, whether the traveller wears a plain hat, or one adorned with gold, or bearing the tchinovnik cockade. Accordingly, I so far profited by this information as to put on certain splendid array which I possess as I approached the stations, and (I will not say *therefore*) I obtained my horses.

This is further illustrated by the treatment received by an able correspondent of the *Times*, who has recently been in the Caucasus. On

the steamer towards sunset. The Suifun is 120 yards wide. It varies in summer from 30 inches to 7 feet in depth, and in winter rises 20 feet. Our vessel was named *Suifun*, after the stream, and drew 2 feet of water, and could steam 8 or 10 miles an hour. Vladivostock was only 50 miles distant, but the boat was not suited for the sea, and therefore, on reaching the mouth of the river at Richnoi, 30 miles distant, we were to be transhipped to a sea-going steamer, the *Amur*, and so landed at Vladivostock. The *Suifun* was not a passenger vessel in the ordinary sense of the word, but belonged to the Government. It was used for bringing the mails from Khabarofka, and if there happened to be passengers accompanying them, they travelled the 50 miles free. They were, moreover, so obliging, that, if travellers arrived and telegraphed to the post as I had done, the two ships were put in motion; and as if that were not enough, an allowance was made to the officers to feed hungry passengers free of expense, so that, on the whole, this was the cheapest 50 miles I travelled.

I did not know of these arrangements at first, and heard that there were no provisions to be had on board, and no sleeping accommodation. My fellow-

arriving at a station, he was informed that he could not have horses because they were detained for an English general, whose arrival was expected every minute. Somewhat chafed, the correspondent took to his legs, being anxious to secure a certain view before nightfall; and it was not till he reached the next station, tired and enraged, that his vexation was turned into mirth by discovering that the horses had all the while been intended for himself. The préfet had politely telegraphed to the post-masters to have horses ready for "a distinguished" Englishman; and as the one idea of distinction in the mind of a Russian peasant is the rank of a general, the post-master was expecting an officer in uniform, and the correspondent in plain clothes not coming up to this, he refused him the horses.

assenger slept in the open air, on deck, and I thought should be compelled to do the same; but the captain ave me an excellent cabin, with plenty of room, which he officer, however, would not share. I had not been ong on board when my clerical services were asked or a second time. We were to pass a saw-mill where ived a Protestant family, and the captain, knowing hat the children were unbaptized, thought my coming ery opportune, and asked whether, if he stopped he steamer, I would go ashore and officiate. As we pproached Richnoi we came in sight of the mill, built, s I afterwards ascertained, by Captain de Vries, and ubsequently sold to the Government. There are hree such mills near Vladivostock, employing 39 workmen, chiefly Chinese, who earn £4,500 a year. The manager was a Swede, named Lovelius, his wife, f I mistake not, being one of the whaling community who had come from Finland. The father spoke a little English, calling me "parson"; and after I had christened his three children he placed a fee in my hand. When I demurred to take it, he said he wished to stand indebted to no man, and added that I had saved him a "lot of trouble," for otherwise he must have brought all the children into Vladivostock, when there chanced to arrive a minister or chaplain.*

* I did not grasp the full meaning of this till some days after, and then I learned that every child in Russia must have a certificate of baptism, wanting which sundry civil difficulties may arise. It was well, therefore, that I chanced to give certificates on these two occasions, of which I sent notice, 6,000 miles off, to Moscow, to be copied into the register of "the nearest parish church." The Russian certificate of baptism gives the sponsors' names, and is signed over a 15*d.* stamp by the officiating priest and deacon. The certificate is then sent to the bishop's registry for another stamp of like value, in addition to which, to expedite the matter it is customary to add a rouble or two for the bishop's clerk.

The saw-mill was prettily situated, and the manager received good remuneration, but he was not much in love with his position; for one thing, the mosquitoes troubled him, as on the previous evening they did me.* Fear of the Manza robbers, however, troubled the manager more, and he pointed to a house across the river where they had lately murdered an old man of seventy.

On reaching the mouth of the Suifun we met the *Amur*, and the two vessels exchanged passengers, whereupon I discovered, to my surprise, that some of our new officers were those I had travelled with on the Shilka. I had breakfasted that morning, not very comfortably, in the open air, and was, therefore, ready for dinner in the officers' cabin, after which it was I learned that I had eaten at the expense of the Emperor; and then, steaming down the Amur Gulf, and rounding the promontory into the Golden Horn, we dropped anchor before Vladivostock.

* I had been recommended sundry remedies against these insects, and small vermin generally,—such as the burning of incense, a mosquito mixture of *pyretum roseum*, and another, the essential oil of cloves. I was prevailed upon to take some of the last-named, and offered the bottle to the officer travelling with me to try the first experiment. It made his hands and face tingle, but not in vain; and I followed suit, to find that the little nuisances approached one's skin, evidently with malicious intent, and then changed their minds and sailed away.

CHAPTER LII.

VLADIVOSTOCK.

Situation of town.—Lodged with Captain de Vries.—Chinese labourers.—Chinese convicts.—Coreans.—Inhabitants of Vladivostock.—Presented at the Governor's house.—Admiral Erdmann's improvements.—Visit to barracks.—Boys' high school.—Education in Russia, its cost and method.—Vladivostock Girls' Institute; and Free School.—Statistics of crime.—Telegraph companies.—Sunday services.—Protestantism in Siberia.—Village of exiles.—General remarks on exiles.—Preparations for departure.

VLADIVOSTOCK derives its lordly name from its supposed "command of the east." The town overlooks an inlet, sheltered by islands, at the end of a promontory jutting out from the middle of the bay of Peter the Great. Behind the harbour rises a lofty hill, crowned by a watch-tower, to which I climbed during my stay, and was rewarded by a remarkably fine view. Northwards stretched the well-wooded Muravieff promontory. East and west lay the gulfs of the Amur and the Ussuri, down the former of which I had steamed from the Suifun; whilst to the south were mountainous islands with rocky headlands, separated from the mainland by the eastern "Bosphorus." Descending from this elevated spot, and looking from the verandah of the Governor's house, a less extensive view is obtained, but a very pretty one, comprising the entrance to the harbour called the "Bay of the Golden Horn," with its two headlands forming the west and southern shores.

The depth of water within the harbour is from 30 to 60 feet, and, at the entrance, about double these soundings. The "Bosphorus" is from 60 to 120 feet in depth, and after passing Kazakevich Island, this increases to 200 feet and upwards.

As I steamed into the harbour on Monday afternoon, the 15th September, it was well filled with the ships of many nations, including Chinese junks with their clumsy sails. A German gunboat had just replaced an English line-of-battle ship, and an Italian man-of-war arrived during my stay. There were Russian ships from the Siberian and Pacific fleets, merchant vessels (of which 50 a year visit the port), and a number of boats, many of which ply between Vladivostock, Olga, and Paseat bays. I found, however, no regular service to Japan, but was told that I could probably leave in a Russian man-of-war within a fortnight.

I sought a lodging with Captain de Vries, a Heligolander by birth, who, when in command of a passenger ship plying between England and New York, had become an American subject, and had again changed his nationality to Russian on settling in Siberia at the time of the annexation of the Amur. He had travelled over Siberia, and had a minute knowledge of the Amur and Russian Manchuria; so that from him I acquired a great deal of information, whilst his kind-hearted English wife spared no pains to make me comfortable. In fact, I found the 15 days of my stay at Vladivostock the pleasantest of my tour; for not only had I time to rest and write and acquire information, but I was almost daily received as a guest at the houses of the Governor, or of some of the many inhabitants who spoke English.

The population of Vladivostock in the Almanack is

tated to be 8,431, but was estimated to me on the spot at 5,000. The births for 1878 were given by the priest as 184, marriages 13, and deaths 102, of which last 66 were males. The population, however, must fluctuate greatly, for during the previous year 8,000 troops had been quartered in and about the town; and I saw the earth batteries they had thrown up to receive the English, in case the treaty of Berlin had been settled the wrong way. Happily it went the right way; and when H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, on a northern cruise, steamed into Vladivostock, instead of being injured by torpedoes or fired upon, the officers were invited to dine at the admiral's house. I judged the party must have been a pleasant one, for the commander of the Siberian fleet told me he had been immensely pleased with the English admiral, and the Governor's wife and family had nothing to say of the officers but what was gracious and kind.

A large number of the inhabitants of Vladivostock are Manzas, Coreans, and Chinese, whose presence is looked upon in different lights. My host, for instance, thought their numbers a hindrance to Russian progress, because they outbid the Russians, work cheaper, and undersell them. In fact, this was one of the subjects upon which the captain used to wax warm. Accustomed to the high prices of American markets, he was sorely offended at the insignificant profits proposed to him by the Chinese, and, after speaking of their miserable offers for his goods or services, he used to wind up his orations by telling me, in not quite classical English, "There ain't no footur for this country." The Governor's wife and other Russians thought differently, for, apart from the larger

exports and imports,* they had the Chinese to thank for the vegetable market and the performance of a great deal of local work at a cheap rate, which otherwise would possibly not have been done at all.†

Emigrants from the Corea take refuge on Russian soil, in spite of the Corean death penalty attached. In 1868 there were 1,400 of these fugitives; but in the following year, when floods in the Corea drove additional multitudes to seek refuge on neighbouring soil, their further immigration was forbidden by the Russians, and some of the fugitives were sent back, and, on their return, decapitated. ‡

Sad accounts of the Manzas were heard at Vladivostock. My host employed, he said, an old man whom he one day missed, and found that he had been murdered, to be robbed of £10. The Manzas are

* Réclus gives these statistics concerning Russian trade with China :—
Average of 1827—31, £120,000 exports, £20,000 imports, £140,000 total; *i.e.*, 1 per cent. of total Russian trade.
" 1842—46, £650,000 exports, £650,000 imports, £1,300,000 total; *i.e.*, 8 per cent. of total Russian trade.
" 1864—68, £580,000 exports, £450,000 imports, £1,030,000 total; *i.e.*, 2½ per cent. of total Russian trade.
The year 1876, £250,000 exports, £1,410,000 imports, £1,660,000 total; *i.e.*, 2 per cent. of total Russian trade.

† The number of Chinese and their congeners in the Russian littoral was estimated, in 1873, at from 3,000 to 7,000; and this would be multiplied a hundredfold if free emigration were permitted. In 1861, after the cession of the Sea Coast to the Russians, the Chinese Government forbade its subjects any longer to colonize in the country with their wives. The rich, therefore, returned home, leaving the poor; and these were joined by Manchu brigands and vagabonds, generically called Manzas, or Freemen—so named in reproach by the Chinese as outlaws, though the Manzas call themselves *Pao-toui-tzi*, that is, "walkers" or "couriers."

‡ In 1873 there were about 3,500 Coreans in the Primorsk, of whom, says Réclus, more than half permitted themselves to be baptized—the correctness of which latter statement I am disposed to doubt. I heard nothing of any such number of Corean Christians, and the priest at Vladivostock told me that in ten years he had baptized only about 10 pagans. He was not a missionary, it is true, nor did I hear of one so far south.

pirates also. In their transactions with the Russians the Chinese demand to be paid in silver money, and this they take home by sea. Hence I saw more silver roubles in the Sea-coast province than I had observed in any other part of the empire. I saw too, at Khabarofka, a considerable sum of silver money in Mexican dollars. The Manza robbers, accordingly, watch for the boats, murder the crews, and secure the booty.

The Coreans were described as very industrious. They dress in white, and tie up their hair in the shape of a horn. Their summer hats resemble those of the Gilyaks, except that they are hexagonal instead of circular. I went into some of their houses, the walls of which were of mud, plastered on a framework of straw. The floor was of beaten earth, with a mud fireplace in the centre, and a divan round the walls. In the best houses, the wife had a separate apartment. Fire burns in the centre by day, and the flues, under the divan, are heated morning and evening. The people live on millet and rice, and use a spoon of bronze, with a nearly circular flat bowl. Taking one from a man who was eating, I presented the spoon in one hand and a silver coin in the other, intimating that I wished to buy; and when he had taken the coin the master of the house came up, and, receiving from me the spoon and from the man the coin, he graciously returned them both, implying that he *gave* me what I desired.

The Russian inhabitants of Vladivostock consist almost entirely of officers and persons connected with the army and navy, and there are several foreign inhabitants besides,—some of them Germans, Finns, and Americans. England was represented by an

engineer, who went there, I believe, as a mechanic, and whose son-in-law, at the time of my visit, was mayor of the town.*

In 1878 there were in Vladivostock 80 merchants of the first guild, who pay in Russia a tax of £50 per annum; 185 of the second guild, who pay £6 per annum; 228 temporary merchants, and 99 street-hawkers; also 215 first-class and 209 second-class clerks. †

The junks of the Chinese, their little houses of wood, their sheds and implements, give to Vladivostock a different aspect from that of ordinary Siberian towns. The Russian houses are chiefly of wood, and among the public buildings are both barracks and winter quarters for the seamen of the fleet. To these must be added the Admiralty, an officers' club, two high-class schools for boys and girls, a library, two free schools, a Russian and a Lutheran church, two telegraph stations, a dockyard, and the Governor's house.

At this last I was presented, on the day after my

* In Russian towns having not less than 5,000 inhabitants there are 30 supervisors, three more being added for each 1,500 of the population; and it is over these the mayor presides. Other civic arrangements, applying to towns, are an *uchastok*, consisting of from 10 to 20 houses; a *quartal*, or square, or block; a *chast*, consisting of from five to ten quartals; and a *government* town of three chasts and upwards. The police-master is at the head of affairs; under him is a *chastny pristaf* for each chast, under whom are chiefs of quartals, with uchastok officers under them.

† Manufactured goods were brought to the town to the value of £100,000, of which £40,000 worth were transported into the interior, and the increase of trade was reported to be 20 per cent. on that of the previous year; but I am not aware to what departments of trade this increase is to be apportioned, or whether it was due to the abnormally large garrison. Réclus gives the commerce of Vladivostock in 1879:—Imports, £218,495; and exports, £10,452.

arrival, by Captain Naumoff, the captain of the port. The Governor was away on a tour of inspection, but I was introduced to Madame Erdmann, who spoke excellent English, and had all the manners and charm of an English lady. She was a German-Russian from the Baltic provinces, and both she and her husband were Protestants—and zealous ones, too, for they had come out to Vladivostock with the intention of effecting some good in the place, and were evidently doing it. My host, Captain de Vries, bore testimony to the material improvements which had been made by the Governor; for, said he, until the admiral came, "we had no road for the buggy." His Excellency made also a pretty pleasure-garden at his own cost, for which, now that it is finished, the Government allows a grant for maintenance. Admiral Erdmann, who combined the three offices of Admiral of the Fleet, Chief of the Military, and Civil Governor of the province, drew a stipend of about £2,000 a year, kept an establishment of 15 servants, and seemed to take pleasure in entertaining in vice-regal style the officers of men-of-war of all nations visiting the port.

But Admiral and Madame Erdmann have left other monuments than these to testify to their endeavours to promote the welfare of the town. When they arrived there was no system of poor relief, whereupon her Excellency called together the ladies of the place, and organized a society which has been an immense benefit. She proposed, in the first place, to build a free school, which was done. The institute or boarding-school for girls also was enlarged, and Madame had been the prime mover in another effort to build a Lutheran church and manse. The means by which

funds were raised for these charitable objects were, in part, concerts and fancy fairs. One that took place during the first week I was there was described to me as resembling those in England, and I heard that by two such fêtes within a fortnight they cleared the sum of £500.

I was invited to dine at the admiral's house soon after my arrival, and met there the officers of the Russian clipper *Djiguitt*, in which I afterwards left Siberia. A band performed during the evening, and fairly surprised me by its excellence; for I had met with nothing to equal it in Russia, and had heard little music of any kind in crossing Siberia. This dinner-party brought me into contact with several naval people, and I subsequently met a Commander Terentieff, who was exceedingly kind in translating for me. He accompanied me one morning to the temporary barracks of the first battalion, whose chief is the Grand Duke Alexei. Its standard was presented by Peter the Great, and the Commandant informed me with pride that it was this battalion that escorted the Russian Ambassador across the Mongolian desert to Peking in the seventeenth century. The barracks were shown me as something noteworthy, in that they were built of mud-bricks not burnt, after the fashion of the new ones at Tashkend. All inside was orderly, but the bedsteads were somewhat close together. Some of the extras in furniture, such as here and there a bright counterpane or quilt, had been purchased by the economies of the regiment. I tasted their soup, and found it excellent. The men varied in age from 22 to 26. Barracks of ordinary bricks for 200 men were in course of construction. Usually the Russian soldiers

ire their own builders, but in this instance accommodation, including a room for gymnastics convertible into a chapel, was being erected by Chinese labourers at a cost of £6,000.

From the barracks we went to the lock-up, where were 20 military and 21 civil prisoners, the latter being for the most part Manza brigands. At our entrance they went down on all-fours, and continued in that posture whilst one was deputed to ask how their trial was going on; and another, thinking, I suppose, to expedite matters, said that he wished to be baptized. They were a sorry-looking lot; but I must give them credit for keeping their chamber cleaner than the Russian prisoners did. The hide upon which each of them slept was neatly rolled up, and all was arranged in order.

The commander took me to visit the boys' pro-gymnasium or high-class school for 45 scholars, established four years previously. It was modelled on precisely the same plan as all the schools of its class throughout Russia. Hence two boys in the same grade of school, though one may be at Moscow and the other at Vladivostock, go through the same studies, and keep the same hours to each subject. The scholars dress in a blue and white uniform, and a boy, after passing through the preparatory class, goes on through the various grades up to the sixth, or, for a higher education, to the seventh and eighth classes. He may then go to the university, or to the Lyceum, to study philology and jurisprudence; or, again, to one of the academies, with a view to special studies, such as medicine, mineralogy, divinity, etc.

The cost of education in Russia, as compared with

England, is low.* The Russian curriculum looks very formidable on paper, and I have heard from an English tutor in Russia that the boys are obliged to work exceedingly hard to pass their examinations. He thought they were worked harder than English boys, and acquired more theoretical knowledge, though the education is of a less practical character than in England.† Corporal punishment is forbidden, and is replaced by impositions; and when these are inflicted the scholar receives a note stating his fault, which he must take home and bring back signed by his parents. Should a boy fail to pass his examination in each of his classes, he is usually turned out of the gymnasium, which is a serious loss to him, because a boy gains military exemptions according to the class he is in on leaving school.‡

Besides the boys' school at Vladivostock I visited

* For instruction and books the first three classes pay 18*s.* a year, the three higher classes £3 2*s.* a year. In certain places only they can board and lodge, in which case they pay £24, or, with clothing, £32 per annum. The average total cost of a boy's education, exclusive of food and clothing, up to the age of 21, in high-class schools in Russia, is £240, and for special schools for army, navy, etc., £300.

† The subjects of Russian study are as follows: Prayers learnt *memoriter;* explanation of most important chapters in Old and New Testaments; Old and New Testament history; principles and doctrines of the Orthodox Church; catechism; Divine revelation, sacred legends and holy writings; ancient and modern books; faith, hope, charity: Greek and Russian Church histories; Sclavonic and Russian language and literature: Latin, Greek; arithmetic, algebra, geometry, plane trigonometry, and physical geography: natural sciences, electricity, galvanism, light, heat, motion, meteorology, chemistry: natural history, geology, botany, zoology: history, ancient, modern, Oriental, Greek, and Roman: geography: German, and one other modern language at choice, except that in certain seaport towns (as at Vladivostock) it *must* be English. This course applies to boys' gymnasia throughout Russia, and all the principal subjects are compulsory. Others may be studied out of the gymnasium, such as music, languages, technology, practical chemistry, etc.

‡ Thus, whilst 7 years' service is exacted from a recruit who is unedu-

the girls' institute for the daughters of naval officers, and witnessed the opening religious ceremony of blessing the house after the long vacation. Each child as she came up to kiss the Gospels was sprinkled with holy water, as were also the visitors; after which the priest and his assistant went over the building, sprinkling in all directions. The inspector subsequently declared what children were to be advanced to higher classes. The subjects taught were in keeping with those of the boys' gymnasium, from which the institute differed in that the children were lodged, clothed, and boarded; 12 free, the rest on payment of £20 per annum. The Government gives a grant of £1,000 per annum towards this school, and the remainder is made up by the children's fees and voluntary contributions. The cleanliness and good arrangement of this building were striking, not to say luxurious. A great deal, no doubt, was due to the fact that the Governor's wife visited one of the schools every day. The senior class had two girls of 15 and 16 years of age. To my questions in geography they gave good answers, and in the Gospels fair. They had not read the Epistles, but were expecting so to do that year. One girl was from a peasant home, the other the daughter of a foreign merchant, but they appeared throughout to stand on a level with the officers' daughters. They had a custom of posting up on a red

cated, and 3 years from one who has passed through an elementary school, a boy who goes from the 5th class of a gymnasium serves as a soldier only 2 years; from the 6th class only 1 year; and from the 7th class, or the university, only 6 months, after which he can be examined for an officer's commission, or may retire into the first reserve during 10 years, and then into the second reserve up to 40 years of age, after which he is altogether free from military service.

board for a year the name of the best girl in the school. At the time of my visit the same maiden had held this "blue ribbon" for five years consecutively. Whether it was for excellence of intellect or conduct I know not, but I amused them by offering a prize, such as I had seen given in the schools of the Irish Church Missions, called the "best beloved" prize. The girls were ranged in a line, and each came and whispered in the ear of the teacher the name of the schoolfellow she loved best, and the girl who gained the highest number of votes received the prize. The idea was new to them, and they said the whispering was like going to confession.

There was yet another school the Governor's wife took me to see—the little free school—built by the society she had founded, and of which it is not too much to say that it was the neatest and best-built house in the town. It was furnished in a manner that would be thought too good for a ragged school in England, and it struck me, as did the institute, that it was somewhat over-provided with teachers.*

There were 30 children on the books, of whom

* I learnt something of Russian teachers' salaries. At the institute the directress received £150 per annum; two teachers £100 each; an assistant £60; linen custodian £25; housekeeper £30. They had 42 scholars; and in the building they employed 8 male and female servants, at a salary of £1 per month each. Beside this home staff there were 15 outside teachers, amongst whom the priest received £70 a year. At the boys' gymnasium the teacher of English received £7 10s. per month, and the teacher of German £25; or, to put it in another way, teachers of languages and of the four higher classes received 10s. a lesson, and those of the lower three classes 6s. The teachers elect from their own number an inspector, who receives an additional £60 per annum and a house rent free. Further, the Government appoints a director, at a salary of £250 per annum. All teachers in Siberia appointed by the Government receive an increase of 25 per cent. of their salary every five years; and after ten years' service have an annual pension of half their salary.

one class came in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. The religious instruction consisted in learning the 10 principal prayers of the Russian Church from a small primer, the contents of which would be as much or, I was told, rather more religious knowledge than the average Russian peasant would know. The children received at Christmas presents of clothing, and a marked increase of attendants takes place as the time for the gifts draws near—a phenomenon not confined to Siberian schools!

Madame Erdmann told me of an industrial school in the town for boys, where they are paid 6*d.* a day for their work. It must not, however, be inferred from these remarks about the educational condition of Vladivostock that things so prevail throughout the province. On the contrary, there are only 15 elementary schools throughout the Primorsk, attended by 215 boys and 66 girls; and the low condition of education was alleged to the Emperor as one of the principal causes of crime in the district.*

The foreign communications of Vladivostock are in summer tolerably numerous. Ships from various nations come northwards to avoid the heat of the tropics, or to get coal at Dui, and put in at Vladivostock for provisions, the prices of which, in the meat and vegetable markets, immediately rise on the arrival of a large ship.

* Thus the official report dealing with the morality of the people called attention to the fact that many are convicts and soldiers sent to the district for punishment, to the unusually large importation of alcohol and Chinese brandy, to the high price of necessaries, the insufficient number of free marriageable women, and, lastly, to the low condition of education. The chief causes of crime were given as gambling and drunkenness; and the crimes committed in 1878 were: insubordination to authorities 13, breaking prison bounds 4, vagrancy 31, murder 5, personal violence 11, libel and assault 12, theft 27, and highway robbery 11.

Again, the inhabitants of this town in the far east have the advantage of two telegraph stations, by one of which they can send a message to London through Siberia, and by the other *viâ* China and India. The latter wires are those of the Great Northern Telegraph Company, opened in 1871, and passing through Hakodate and Nagasaki, thence to Shanghai and Amoy, and so on to India and Suez. The latter wire goes by the route I followed as far as Khabarofka, there meeting wires from Nikolaefsk, and then continues across Siberia by the route I travelled. The number of messages sent in 1878 from Russia to China was 595, and to Japan 515, or 1,110 in all.

Of the two Siberian wires, one, I found, is reserved for international correspondence. Of 20,000 messages passing from the south through Vladivostock, no less than 15,000 were in English. Of the remaining 5,000, those in the French and German languages absorbed the larger proportion.*

* A comparison of the salaries of the clerks shows the English company to pay a higher rate. The English company has 25 European clerks, independently of Japanese, Chinese, and Portuguese subordinates. The European clerks begin at a salary of £320 a year, and go on to £420, after which they ascend to higher offices and shorter hours as superintendents, etc., and rise to £800 a year or more. In the Russian service a clerk begins at £2 12*s.* a month if speaking only Russian, and receives £2 10*s.* a month extra for each new language acquired. A first-class clerk has about £120 a year, with a house and perquisites; and even a superintendent receives only £280, with the like additions, part of which consist of rye meal or flour. I heard one man say he bought up this meal of his fellow-clerks to give to his horse and chickens. They also receive travelling-money periodically. I was favourably impressed with the bearing of the telegraph officials throughout Siberia. In some cases they live a most secluded life. At Busse, for instance, I met one who had been shut off from the world in that tiny place on the Ussuri for nearly ten years, hoping to realize a pension of £36 a year. The English company gives a pension three-tenths of salary after 10, one-half after 20, and seven-tenths after 3[illegible] years' service.

The director of the Great Northern Company was Mr. Russell, at whose house I dined, and whose wife played the harmonium at the Sunday service. I have already mentioned the heartiness with which Russians and foreigners alike assisted these services in the Primorsk. At Nikolaefsk, not only did the authorities send round notice of what was to take place, but they seemed to vie with one another in offering assistance. The military commandant offered the use of a room at the club; the captain of the port, being a Protestant, seemed almost aggrieved that his house from the first had not been chosen, and the chief civil authority lent the best room in the Governor's residence, and attended the service with other dignitaries in full uniform. There were present on the first Sunday 33 persons, Greeks, Romans, and Protestants, representing Russia, Poland, England, America, Finland, Germany, and Sweden. Some came, doubtless, out of curiosity to see the first English service on the Amur, but many were able to understand; and on the second Sunday, which was wet, there were 20 persons present, all men but one. At Vladivostock the service was held in the new Lutheran church. The congregation numbered 27 persons, representing quite as many nationalities as at Nikolaefsk, and some Swiss besides. So few were familiar with the offices of the English Church that I was compelled to make the service of an irregular character; but it was pleasant, after the sermons, to have one and another grasping one's hand, and expressing their thanks for what they had heard. Some of them had not had such an opportunity for a long time. I was greatly struck with one thing that reached me in connection with

these services. Some of the Russians had never attended a Protestant service before, and more than one remarked upon its solemnity. This I thought remarkable as coming from persons who from childhood had been accustomed to an ornate and very elaborate ritual, and none other. They were plainly struck by the quietness that prevailed and by the appeal to the intellect as manifest in the sermon, in contrast to their service of worship only, with persons moving hither and thither; and a well-educated officer, commenting upon the solemnity of the service, said that he had never before been impressed by a sermon in his life.

The offertory at Vladivostock was given to the building fund, for the church was not quite finished. A resident pastor was expected to arrive in the course of a few months, which would make four Lutheran ministers in Siberia, instead of the former three living in or near Omsk, Tomsk, and Irkutsk, their general superintendent, Pastor Jürgenssen, living at Moscow. The number of Protestant churches in Siberia is five, and of Protestants about 7,000. At Ekaterineburg are living some 300 German Protestants, but nine persons, we heard, was considered a large Sunday congregation. In the vicinity of Tobolsk some of the Lettish peasants were said to have joined the Russian Church, and some to have fallen away from religion altogether. The account, however, of 1,800 Finns living at Ruschkova was better. They had petitioned for, and were awaiting, a pastor.

At Vladivostock I took my farewell of Siberian exile life at an experimental penal colony called "First River" village. Accompanied by the German captain

of the *Cyclop*, Captains Boris and Charles de Livron, and a lady, we proceeded thither on horseback, by a pretty ride through a partially-cleared forest, till, from the top of a hill, we saw a brewery, brick-fields, and, not far distant, nestling among the trees, the exiles' village. It consisted of about 20 log houses, occupied by 15 convicts and five others who had served their time, and who might have removed elsewhere, but they so far liked their quarters that they chose to remain. Two naval men lived in the village for the purpose, ostensibly, of keeping order, and a few Chinese had been attracted to settle in the place. Four of the convicts were under sentence of 15 years' hard labour, one for 20 years, and one for life. They were condemned to Sakhalin, but, seeing that their wives had accompanied them, and that there was not enough work in the coal-mines, the kind-hearted Governor had obtained permission to place them in the little colony as an experiment. The men had built their own houses, and took it in turns to go into Vladivostock, from eight to twelve, to do night work. They might earn what they could by day, and the wives were able to add to the store by laundry work. One wife had by this means possessed herself of two cows.

Besides this, they might take as much land as they chose to cultivate. They were growing potatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, and cabbages, but the soil was said to be unsuitable for corn. Pigs and poultry were running about; and though, according to their own account, one of them with seven children found it difficult to make a living, yet the others did so easily.

One of the convicts, thinking I was a Government official, informed me that he had not yet received his

new clothes, whereupon I learned that, when they begin to colonize, they receive monthly 72 lbs. of flour and 5*d.* a day. Every year they received a *shuba*, or sheepskin coat, underlinen, two pairs of winter boots, three pairs of summer shoes, and, once in three years, a long coat. In one of the best of the houses we found a clean, orderly room, with a good samovar, and plenty of pictures and photographs. The owner possessed two cows and a horse; so we were told, at least, by a fellow-convict, who took us into his garden and seated us beneath a bower of wild vines. Milk and wild grapes were afterwards brought for our refreshment. This man had been in the Imperial Guard, and had finished his military service, when, having invited some friends to his house, he killed one of them in a drunken quarrel. I tried to get at the relative positions of some of these convicts before the committal of their crimes and after, and found in one case that in Russia the man was a drunkard and poor, whereas in this village he could live well, and could not get intoxicated so easily, by reason of his distance from Vladivostock. There were but one man and one woman in the village who could read, and one had friends who corresponded with him from Russia. The children were educated at the industrial school at Vladivostock. Thus my last specimen of Siberian exile life was the most favourable of all.

I had now followed the exiles from Moscow all across Siberia, and, with the exception of the mines at Nertchinsk and Dui, had seen them under the varying circumstances in which they live. Looking at the matter calmly and dispassionately, I am bound to say that "exile to Siberia" no longer calls up to my

mind the horrors it did formerly. I am quite prepared to believe that instances have occurred of bad management, oppression, and cruelty. I have already quoted some cases; but that the normal condition of things has been exaggerated I am persuaded. Taken at the worst, "condemned to the mines" is not so bad as it seems, and in the case of peasant exiles, willing to work, I cannot but think that many of them have a better chance of doing well in several parts of Siberia than at home in some parts of Russia. English people are accustomed to think of exiles like the parents of "Elizabeth," banished to a region in the far north where scarcely anything grows; but a little consideration would show this to be, in the great number of cases, extremely unlikely, for the Government would then have to keep them, whereas in the south they can keep themselves. On the sea coast, women convicts get excellent places as servants. One hardship connected with their lot is that, until they have served their time or gained their good conduct class, they cannot marry; and even then the husband, if a free man, must undertake not to quit Siberia and so leave his wife behind. This law is rigidly enforced. I heard of one case of a woman who had behaved particularly well, and whose husband wished to return to Russia, for which even the Governor of a province petitioned, but the request was refused.

A lady told me at Vladivostock that some of her convict servants had recently said to her, "We have such a good time of it here in Siberia, that, had we known it, we would certainly have committed a crime before to get here; and now we mean to write to our relations and tell them to do something to get

sent here too,"—a speech that will probably strike the reader as the foolish saying of a servant girl, but the truth of which, *in this particular case*, I do not doubt. The servant had the good fortune to be taken into the service of Madame Boris de Livron, who had spent many years in America, and of whose home I can speak, because I dined therein; and one had only to contrast with it some wretched *izba* in European Russia, from which, perhaps, the woman came, and her laborious work in the fields, to render it exceedingly likely that she spoke, after all, only the sober truth. That this was an exceptional case may very well be, and so also the exile village was in a manner exceptional, for the exiles are usually planted, on their release, among colonists, rather than put into villages by themselves; but I have quoted these instances as the least repulsive forms of exile life that came under my notice, and to show that, once set free from prison, the prosperity of the banished is pretty much in their own hands.

Before leaving Vladivostock I called upon the priest, who gave me information about the church, and I likewise made the acquaintance of several of the merchants, among them Mr. Lindholm, who had whaling vessels in the Sea of Okhotsk. With him I exchanged my paper money, at the rate of two roubles four kopecks per Mexican dollar, taking with me a draft on his partners, Messrs. Walsh, Hall, and Co. of Yokohama. Thus prepared I awaited the return of the Governor, and on Monday afternoon, September 29th, the admiral's flag appeared in the harbour; the naval captains and military officers assembled to present their reports, and I got my luggage on board the *Djigwitt*.

Madame Erdmann insisted on my coming, however, the same evening to be introduced to the admiral, which I thought very kind, immediately after his prolonged absence, and the weariness of his journey. A warm reception was accorded me by the Governor, a lively interest manifested in my plans, and I left *terra firma* to sleep in the ship.

CHAPTER LIII.

RUSSIANS AFLOAT.

Reflections on leaving Siberia.—Departure.—The Russian navy.—The *Djiguitt*.—Seamen's food, clothing, work.—Relation between officers and men.—Received as captain's guest.—Progress.—Hospital arrangements.—Arrival at Hakodate.—Divine service.—Religious professions of seamen.—Inspection of ship.—A "strong gale."—Russian sentiments towards Englishmen.—Cause of dislike.—Misrepresentations by English press.—Russian writings.—Transhipped to American steamer.—Arrivals at San Francisco and London.

"The sailor sighs as sinks his native shore

And climbs the mast to feast his eyes once more."

SIBERIA was not my native land, and I did not climb for a last fond look; yet I confess to drawing half a sigh as I was borne away from Vladivostock. At all events I was not unmoved, and various thoughts presented themselves—some, I hope, of thankfulness that I had been permitted to cross the Old World without scratch or bruise.*

But my happiest reflections were connected with what has been called my work. I entered the country very much in the dark as to what could be done, and what I did was little enough to boast of; yet, to me, it was a source of gratitude that I had been permitted to place within reach of at least every prisoner and hospital patient in Siberia a portion of the Word of God. A few opportunities also for the exercise of

* For the Author's itinerary round the globe, *see* Appendix F.

clerical functions had presented themselves, such as the services at Nikolaefsk and Vladivostock, as also some others of a private character, which linger pleasingly in the memory. Since my return, news has come from Archangel that the books I left in 1878 have caused inquiry and demand for the Scriptures. Again, more than one who has followed me in Northern Asia has told of the manner in which the books left at the post-houses are treasured, and, last winter, two gentlemen, travelling over a large portion of Western Siberia, found the tracts I had left in great demand. One of them writes that they have been a boon and a pleasure at many a peasant's fireside. If, then, the result were no more than this, it would be something to have ministered gratification to tens of thousands of readers. But I had higher aims; for I believed that in those Scriptures and tracts there were germs of new life and thought and hope. I remembered what reading the Scriptures had done for men in other lands,—for Luther in his cell, and Bunyan in prison; and having sown the seed, I was content to leave it with Him in Whose name I went forth. Then I sailed away with the thought that I had done what little I could. Those who labour in similar fields will understand and sympathize with my feelings, and some perhaps will breathe a prayer that in the great day of account the harvest may be plenteous.

As the *Djiguitt* steamed out of the harbour we fired a salute of seven guns, and, gliding past the admiral's house, saw his Excellency and Madame Erdmann waving their handkerchiefs from the verandah. Our captain, Charles de Livron, is the admiral's son-

in-law, so that there were hearty farewells passing. Madame Erdmann had kindly expressed to me a wish that our acquaintance thus begun might be continued; and, on leaving, I felt that I was parting from pleasant friends, not only in the Governor's house, but in the town and country too. As I had applied to Captain de Vries for lodgings, I asked, of course, for my bill; but Mrs. de Vries would not hear of one, and the old captain said, "Well, write me a letter, and tell me how you get home, and then come again as soon as you can."

We had hardly lost sight of land before I began to inquire about the Siberian fleet, which I understood to consist of 12 ships, divided into four classes, some being of iron and some of wood; 1 is for the China station, and there are besides 5 transports, 2 cruisers, and 4 gunboats, the last with 3 guns each; the whole being manned by 208 officers and 2,240 seamen. Of these about 380 are employed on shore for mechanical and building purposes, and a far larger number live ashore in winter. Their pay is much higher (nearly double, I heard) than that of sailors in the Baltic fleet.*

And now a word about the *Djiguitt* (pronounced "Jee-geet," and meaning "a horseman"), on board which I was favoured with a passage from Vladivostock to Japan. The clipper had been built four years pre-

* The pay of sailors in the Siberian fleet, afloat and on shore, per month, is as follows :—Deck sailors, 4*s.*; rigging sailors, 4*s.* 4*d.*; steersmen and gunners, 4*s.* 9*d.*; cooks, firemen, carpenters, divers, and assistant clerks, 9*s.*; quartermaster, machinists, and head firemen, 15*s.*; boatswain's mate and foreman of machine room, 18*s.*; boatswain and clerks, 54*s.* Some have extras as perquisites, thus :—Hospital servants, per month, 9*d.*; chief gunners, 1*s.*; and torpedo men, 9*s.* The pay of officers, per month, is as follows :—Midshipmen from £7 10*s.* to £14 14*s.*; lieutenants, £7 10*s.* to £17 10*s.*; commander, £13 to £80; captain of second rank

iously, at a cost of £62,500, and measured 218 feet ng, was of 1,300 tons burden, and fitted with engines f 250 nominal, but 1,200 registered, horse-power. She arried 200 men, with three large guns in the middle f the deck, and four small ones at the sides. The aptain said he relied less upon his guns than upon is torpedoes, the apparatus connected with which ired 30 for defensive and 5 for offensive purposes. By means of wires the torpedoes—a kind supposed to e in possession only of the Russian navy—could be noved about under the water, and caused to explode utomatically or at will. I am incapable of judging ow far this information was correct, but I observed ubsequently, from one of the English newspapers lescribing the *Djiguitt*, and some of her sister ships, hat they were said to be well fitted to damage merchant hipping; and there is no doubt that, had England and Russia declared war in 1878, this clipper would have done her best to cripple the English commercial navy in the Pacific.

The *Djiguitt* had three masts, could spread 15,000 square feet of canvas, and, under sail and steam, was supposed to make 13 knots an hour. We were not fortunate enough, however, to get up to anything near this speed, nine knots on the first day being, if I mistake not, our best travelling. Often it was not more than six knots, and one day we made only 103

(frigate), £15 10*s.* to £100; and captain of first rank (ship), £17 4*s.* to £100. Seamen have all found for them. Officers provide themselves with everything except cabin and furniture, the captain having one man from the ship's company for a servant, the higher officers having one servant for two cabins, and the midshipmen one servant for four cabins. The mess on the *Djiguitt* cost each officer about £6 a month, including holiday wines, and entertainment to guests in port. The officers gave an entertainment before leaving Vladivostock.

miles. Everything on board was scrupulously clean The same thing struck me at Vladivostock, when steering the boat of the chief of the staff, in which I was rowed to the end of the harbour. The boat was manned by six men with 18-feet oars. According to Russian regulations, the men row up to 42 strokes a minute, and I noticed that when their arms were outstretched the men simultaneously bobbed their heads, but whether for obtaining more pulling power, or for appearance' sake, I did not make out.

The sailors in the Imperial navy are now shorter than formerly. The Russian plan was to give from recruits, taken from all parts of the country, the tallest men to the navy, the next to the artillery, and the next to the infantry; but now they have made an alteration, and the navy takes the shortest.*

The food of the seamen on shore I have already alluded to. At sea, each man gets 1 lb. of beef per day and plenty of biscuit. As I saw them eating their meals, sitting at tables, or on deck in circles round a common soup-bowl, they appeared to have enough and to spare, for a good deal of broken victuals was at

* The method of Russian conscription is as follows:—The empire is divided into districts, each of which has annually to send a number of men according to the requirements of the Government. Lots are drawn from the men of 21 years of age, and those thus taken are examined as to size of chest, eyes, ears, teeth, pulling force and general health; and the faulty ones rejected. If sound, they have to serve seven, three, two, one, or half a year, according to their education; after which they pass into the first reserve. Those who escape the lot fall at once into the first reserve. They may then marry; and, if following certain callings, are free from further conscription, and in any case are liable to be drawn again only in time of war or emergency. At 28 these escaped ones fall into the second reserve, which is called up only in case of home invasion. There are besides for those upon whom the lot falls several exemptions, by reason of which they are either free or their service may be postponed.

times thrown overboard; and if, moreover, they do not eat all their allowance (which is usually the case), they may economise and purchase extras for holidays. Rum was served out at least once a day (for the notion that this benefits the men is not yet exploded in Russia), but a man might forego this if he pleased, and receive a trifling pittance instead.*

It was difficult sometimes on so small a ship to find work for 200 men; consequently, a large number of them were employed in labour of a time-killing character, polishing the fittings of the ship and guns, making them in some parts as bright as silver plate. Others were weaving stays, or binding fine wire on telegraph lines for use with the torpedoes. Once or twice I saw them at gun drill. The smaller guns were breech-loaders, firing 15-lb. shot, worked by five men each; and the larger were 90-lb. muzzle-loaders, each worked by 19 men.

There seemed to me to exist an excellent feeling between officers and men. The captain, on leaving

* The clothing served out to the men was similar in character to that of the soldiers already referred to, with the following yearly additions: a flannel shirt and two blue flannel jerseys, two pairs white shoes, two pairs white trousers, and three white shirts with collars, also five yards of towelling and two white cap-covers for hot climates. There is allowed them also 1*s.* for ribbons, 4*s.* for bed-linen, 1*s.* for spoon and knife, and the quartermaster 4*s.* for whistles. The machinists and firemen have each a further addition of two pairs of shoes and a black canvas coat.

With regard to work, Russian sailors usually lift half-a-ton a day. In harbour they work eight hours, and on shore 12 hours, with two hours for rest. On the *Djiguitt* the men rose soon after five, breakfasted, stowed away hammocks, washed the decks and got all clean before 8 o'clock. They then worked till 11, at which hour they dined and rested till 2; then worked again till 5.30, supped, and at 7 retired; but this programme varies, of course, according to time, place, and circumstances. The watches for the men were divided into two of six hours each by day, and three of four hours each by night; but the officers took in rotation five watches of four hours each.

Cronstadt, hinted to his crew that, as he was proceeding to Siberia, he might leave some of them there if they misbehaved. He gave them, however, an excellent character, and said that, on arriving in Japan, he told an officer to let him know the number of men whose conduct since leaving port had been immaculate, and out of 180 men more than 100 were found without a bad mark. These, by way of encouragement, he treated to a special performance in a circus. On another occasion the captain paid some Chinese jugglers to come on board and give the men an exhibition, whilst, in the tropics, the officers had given the men lectures on scientific subjects, illustrated by a magic lantern.

On boarding the *Djiguitt* I had as usual "fallen on my feet." There was a small berth in the vessel set apart for a chance passenger; but the captain honoured me with a place at his table in his own cabin, where things were more than comfortable. My host spoke excellent English, to say nothing of several other languages; and so well educated in this respect were the officers that, although the captain usually invited two of them to dine with us daily, there was seldom or never an occasion when they could not converse with me in English or French. Among the officers were some of the Russian nobility, one a prince, another a baron, and so on; and after sailing with them for 12 days, I came to the conclusion that they were gentlemen and officers of whom any navy might be proud. The doctor played the violoncello, a second officer accompanied on the piano, and others sang part songs. A young baron in Siberia had told me that the officers of the army were badly educated, and worse

"elevé"; but this certainly was not the case with the officers of the *Djiguitt.*

On Sunday the captain and I were invited to lunch in the officers' cabin, where I was reminded of the smallness of the world by the discovery that the first lieutenant sitting next me had been to the Greenwich Observatory, and as he had gained scholastic distinction in Russia, and had the privilege of spending two years in foreign study, he thought of coming again to Greenwich to the Naval College.

We left Vladivostock on Tuesday, the 30th of September, for Yokohama, and made fair progress till, next morning, a slight derangement of the machinery caused us to lift the screw and depend on sails. This piece of brass machinery, weighing nearly five tons, was heaved up by two lines of seamen on either side of the deck, which operation interested me, as did also some of the manœuvres for setting the sails, of which 11 were one day hoisted on the foremast, thereby spreading to the wind about 5,000 square feet of canvas. I accompanied the captain once or twice on his rounds of inspection, and was surprised at the stock of carpenters' tools and stores on board. In the kitchen, divided into two compartments for officers and men, was a Chinese cook, who received excellent wages (the Chinese cook at Madame Erdmann's at Vladivostock received £60 a year); and to him I paid the ordinary passenger's tariff for food of 4*s.* a day. In the fore part of the clipper were two small compartments almost dark, used, when needed, for a prison.* There was a

* I met at Vladivostock the officer who had to do with the legal affairs of the Siberian fleet, acting as judge (aided by three or four others), but whose sentences had to be approved by the admiral.

lazarette on board, and I found that the doctor was obliged to keep a daily report, showing the number of patients in the ship, the number of cases standing over, new cases, cured, sent to hospital, remaining, and dead.*

We sighted Japan on Friday, October 3rd, and early on Saturday morning reached Hakodate, where the ship stayed to get coal. I went on shore, not dreaming that I should know a creature, but soon found a missionary with whom, as a student, I had played football and cricket; and then, walking along the streets, a second surprise awaited me on meeting a youth whom I had known as a boy in Sussex. We stayed only a few hours, but I had time to visit the prison with Mr. Dening, the missionary; and then, getting on board, we steamed away on Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday morning, at half-past nine, a white sail with a red cross was run up to the mast-head, the bugle and drum sounded, and the crew assembled on deck for Divine service. Two men, uncovered, reverently brought an ikon, which was fastened by an officer to the captain's bridge. It was a new ikon (about two feet square) of silver gilt, lately presented by the captain and officers of the ship at a cost of £20. It had been purchased in Petersburg, been sent to Vladivostock *by post*, and was used on this particular Sunday for the first time.†

* The form to be filled up for a patient was something to this effect:—Name of patient, To what duty assigned, Number of his ship at Cronstadt, Age, How long in service, From what province, How often in hospital before, How often ill on board before, Name of disease, When taken ill, When cured or died, How many days ill; and beneath this was a form for showing diagnosis of the disease, heat of body, internal and external treatment, and food. A monthly report also had to be forwarded by the medical officer to Petersburg.

† Each ship has, I believe, its particular ikon, as I found at Kara was the case with each company of Cossacks, who carry the picture in a special

When all was ready the officers and choir were ranged in front and the men behind, and the Commander (in place of Captain de Livron, who is a Lutheran) read prayers and a psalm, the men responding and singing. The service was of short duration, but highly impressive, and very reverential. So, too, was their daily evening prayer, just before going to their hammocks at dusk, when the men, drawn up in double lines facing each other, at a signal doffed their caps, and chanted the Lord's Prayer.*

After Divine service the captain proceeded officially to inspect the ship, which he did in a very thorough manner, looking into every hole and corner for the least speck of dust or disorder. Here a cloth had been left in a recess, and there a piece of biscuit remained on a shelf. Both were ordered to be removed, and the attention of an officer was drawn to the broken hook and eye which attached the hen-house to the bulwarks. The captain even complained because,

carriage. Some of the ikons that have accompanied Tsars to the battle-field are treasured very highly in Russia. Private individuals, when travelling, frequently carry with them ikons, before which in their lodging they light lamps, as I saw in the case of a merchant at Tomsk.

* The religious professions of the seamen (excluding officers) in the Russian fleet I gathered from the Naval Almanack for April, 1879, to be as follows:—

	BALTIC		BLACK.		CASPIAN.	ARAL.	SIBERIAN.		TOTAL.
	Afloat.	Ashore.	Afloat.	Ashore.	Afloat.	Afloat.	Afloat.	Ashore.	
Orthodox Russian Ch.	16,669	289	4,729	31	1,281	291	2,028	308	25,626
Gregorians	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	4
Protestants	759	16	8	7	...	8	7	3	808
Roman Catholics	51	8	13	...	1	9	3	...	85
Jews	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2
Mohammedans	47	...	5	...	43	19	4	1	119
Sects { Molokans	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Sects { Pomorski	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Pagans	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	3
	17,526	313	4,756	38	1,334	330	2,044	312	26,653
	17,839		4,794		1,334	330	2,356		26,653

putting his hand on the polished brass of a gun, he found it somewhat dusty.

This, however, was fine-weather inspection, and we were to have a taste of something different. On Tuesday and Wednesday all had been bright. About two o'clock on Thursday morning a sudden squall struck the ship from right ahead, and caused a commotion, but did no harm, and for the remainder of the day the wind blew coldly from the north. On Friday and Saturday the temperature rose, and on Wednesday, 8th October, we passed through a warm stream with a temperature of 77°, whilst the thermometer on deck indicated only 70°. I had frequently asked how soon we should arrive at Yokohama, and the captain had prudently declined to say; but on Sunday afternoon he volunteered the remark that he was able to assure me that we should be at Yokohama in four days. Luckless boast! for the words had not been long spoken when there came on a tempest such as I had never experienced. Towards sunset the wind whistled and blew "a strong gale," that would be marked 9 in the Beaufort notation (the remaining three degrees being 10, "a whole gale"; 11, "a storm"; 12, "a hurricane"). The topmasts were lowered, the sails furled, and the heavy guns, lest they should break away, were fastened by two extra lashings. Then followed great running about on deck, and climbing the rigging, at which I was looking on amused rather than otherwise. The captain, perceiving this, said, "Ah! we shall soon have the water rough!" And so it came to pass; there was a pendulum on the deckhouse to indicate the careen of the ship, the scale being marked up to 35°, and when I say that the ship

heeled over to 32°, the reader will be prepared for the statement that in the captain's cabin, where I was writing, the heavy table and myself behind it quitted our respective bases, in a very undignified manner, in favour of the opposite side of the cabin. The carpenter was called, and the table screwed down, after which, by tucking my knees tightly between it and a chair, I managed to hold my own. I know not whether the jolting of the tarantass across Siberia had rendered my nerves sea-proof, but, to my agreeable surprise, I found myself able to write during three severe storms on the Pacific and Atlantic. On Monday there ran "a high sea," which the captain marked "7" ("8" standing for "very high," and "9" for "tremendous," beyond which my figures to indicate the disturbance of the water do not go). After the storm came a calm wind with rough waves. We dropped the screw, used steam, and to some extent steadied the ship; but, with all our efforts, made little progress, and burnt a great deal of coal, so that we had not sufficient to steam the remainder of the voyage. The captain said he had never known, in so short a space of time, so many changes of wind, barometer, and weather.

I had learned that the steamer left Yokohama for San Francisco on Saturday, the 11th of October, and as the mail-packet makes the passage from Hakodate to Yokohama in 64 hours, my hope was that I might land in the early part of the week, take a peep at the capital, and then embark for California; but the storm and the calm upset our calculations completely, and I had nothing to do but to submit, and make the best of my ebbing opportunities of gaining Russian information, and of getting my statistics translated.

Being brought into such close proximity with Russian gentlemen for several days, we naturally became somewhat intimate; restraint wore off, and I learned more fully than I had done before the feelings of educated Russians towards England. When passing through Petersburg a general had said to me, "*J'adore les Anglais, mais je hais leurs conseils*," which, in 1879, was natural enough. Also the *Djiguitt* had left Europe during the Russo-Turkish war, and I discovered that her officers had brought away with them unpleasant feelings towards my nation. One of them observed, though not unkindly, that the English had interfered most rudely with Russian affairs, for which, he thought, the English Government was deeply hated by the Russian people, though Englishmen, he said, were not so. He was ready to discuss, very keenly, the probability of war between our two nations; and did not attempt to hide the disappointment of the Russians at being foiled of their purpose to enter Constantinople. He thought that, if war did break out, it would, on the Russian side, be intensely popular.

I set myself to discover, if possible, the cause of the alleged dislike, whereupon I found that, among other reasons, he was extremely sore about the frequent misrepresentation of Russia in English newspapers. He complained that there were certain journals always ready to exaggerate Russian defects; and, to be honest, I could not help allowing there was a measure of truth in what he said. Misrepresentation, however, may arise from two different sources—from ignorance or from malevolence. When passing through the northern capital, I myself saw, in some of the best English newspapers, statements to the effect that Petersburg

was then in such a state that it was penal for anyone to stir out after nine without a certificate; that no evening party might be given without leave from the police; that no student might burn the midnight oil; and that a curfew law forbade a light to be seen in a dwelling after ten: all of which I read with amazement, for I myself was out as I pleased till past midnight, and burned a light in packing nearly all the night through. When I returned to London I said so to the editor of one of the papers, and found that his statements had been due to wrong information.

But complaint was made not merely of mistakes arising from ignorance or wrong information. It was urged that false statements were frequently put forth, and not properly and honorably rectified, when it afterwards became manifest that they were wrong.* I had not up to that time realized to what an extent this was true; but, after reading various books and papers for the present work, I cannot but acknowledge that some of the writers upon Russian affairs do, to put it in the mildest form, make

* As a flagrant instance, they complained of the falseness of the *Daily Telegraph*, respecting the carriage of convicts by the *Nijni Novgorod*, to which I have alluded in my first volume (page 45). I learn from the same paper of November 16th, 1881, that the Russians have been further annoyed by some untrue statements published by the *Daily Telegraph* on June 28th of this year, concerning "judicial and administrative abuses in Russia." These misrepresentations were copied by other papers, from which Mr. Tallack, compiling his report for the Howard Association, and falling into the pit, reproduced the matter thus: "Yet even an Imperial commissioner has recently reported atrocious cruelties to prisoners in Central Russia, including the torture of women with red-hot tongs; the killing of numbers by imprisoning them in dark dungeons; other prisoners reduced to almost naked skeleton figures in hideous caverns; inhuman floggings, 125 lashes being inflicted even for addressing warders in the old peasant style of 'thou' instead of 'you'; and other brutalities." When I read these charges I felt sure they were

the most extraordinary statements. Some of these, as I have said, arise from ignorance, and are pardonable; but others, it is to be feared, arise from something far worse, which I prefer not to have to name. What, for instance, will the reader think of the following extract from an article in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* of December 6th last, which has come to my hand just before going to press?—"The Russian Government does a regular and an important business with Sheffield. Our Russophiles will be charmed. The Government of 'the Divine figure from the North' takes from Sheffield five tons per week of horseflesh. The horses killed for Holy Russia are those which, through decay or disease, are worthless. The dogs' meat thus obtained is bought as food for human beings in Siberia, and, having to travel so far, it is often in a putrid condition when it arrives there, and in all its horrible putrescence it is so served out."

This is remarkable information. The cheapest cost of carriage known to me from Petersburg to the Siberian *frontier* is £5 a ton, taking 12 months in transit (no

untrue, but as I had not visited the prisons of Orenburg, where the atrocities were alleged to have occurred, all I could say was that I had seen prisons nearly all over Russia, and had witnessed nothing answering to such abominations. I ventured, however, to write to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* for information respecting the Russian paper, the *Sjeverny Viestnik* (suppressed, I have since learnt, at least three years ago), from which the statements were said to have come, and I received a polite reply that the writer of the article was travelling in Russia. I then wrote to Mr. Tallack, who inquired concerning the matter of Mr. Kokovtzeff, one of three inspectors-general of prisons, who denied the truth of what had appeared. Accordingly Mr. Tallack (whose zeal in the cause of prison reform is well known), finding that he had been deceived, wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* to say so; but I was sorry to see that, though this paper had given a whole column in bold type to the misstatements, which had been multiplied therefrom by hundreds of thousands, yet all the space they could spare for contradiction was 15 lines in very small type!

ronder that the meat is putrid!); and if to this um be added the cost of the horseflesh and its conveyance from Sheffield, and salt (for the *Telegraph* is kind enough to say, on Dec. 3rd, that the meat is salted, although it becomes putrid!), then how strange it will seem that the Russian Government should come to Sheffield to buy meat, when live stock, as I have already stated, can be purchased in Western Siberia at less than ½*d.* per pound! This, with a vengeance, is 'carrying coal to Newcastle"! But the article goes on to speak of the prisoners working "in quicksilver-mines, where the mercury produces an artificial leprosy that rots blood, bones, and skin"; and then the writer pathetically adds that this "is the unspeakable fate of thousands of Russians in whom education and a disposition and temperament naturally brave have aroused thoughts too deep for tears, and a devoted courage worthy of the Christian martyrs." These "martyrs," moreover, are fed with "flesh swept up from English knackers' yards"—that is to say, with horseflesh carried overland 8,000 miles!—I suppose to Nertchinsk, for the writer wisely abstains from naming the locality of his mines. O wonderful information from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph!* Would that I could be informed where there exists in Siberia a quicksilver-mine at all, that I might hasten thither if only to clear up this mystery about—Sheffield horseflesh!

To return, however, to serious writing. Is it surprising if Russians feel annoyed at calumnies so gross? and ought one who knows them to be so to abstain from giving such statements the lie? Few Englishmen, one trusts, will be proud to read misstatements like these, and the exposure of them, it is to be hoped,

may lead the unimpassioned to reflect on such injustice, and to call it by its proper name. For my own part (humiliating as it is to acknowledge), I have learned to expect from certain quarters exaggerations and misstatements respecting Russian affairs. If any complain to me of the character of Russian diplomacy I reply that I do not defend it. I say nothing of Russians as politicians, and so long as human nature remains as it is there will probably not be wanting writers to fan national jealousies and misgivings to a flame; but no right-minded persons will ever look upon misstatements like those I have quoted, other than with shame and disgust. Such misrepresentations carry also their own Nemesis, for the uninformed, led astray thereby, when they see themselves duped often espouse the opposite cause. Such unfairness has taught me at least to sympathize with Russians who are thus misrepresented; and perhaps I ought to confess that this feeling had something to do with my resolving to write this book.

It does one an immensity of good sometimes to have to listen calmly to an opponent, and I was thankful for the plain speaking I heard on the *Djiguitt*. I am indebted for other similar thoughts to various writings by Russians, among them to Madame Novikoff's "Russia and England—a Protest and an Appeal" (by "O. K."); all the more forcibly put because so politely written. I have said in my preface that of politics I know next to nothing, and it is not in this connection that I agree or disagree with what that accomplished lady has published; but I perceive that "O. K." has found in England what I have found in Russia—a number of warm and generous friends,

between whom one would desire that only the best of feelings should exist. If Russia were but better known, a similar feeling would grow, I feel sure, between Englishmen and Russians generally, and both would be gainers thereby. There are many who wish to know the truth respecting Siberia, and to form an unbiassed opinion, and if what I have written should tend in any degree to this end, I shall be thankful indeed.

On Saturday morning, October 11th, the *Djiguitt* was creeping along, without coal and almost without wind, when a five-masted steamer was seen on the horizon, coming away from Yokohama. "That," said the captain, "is your steamer. Shall I ask them if they will take a passenger?" I quickly decided in the affirmative, packed my luggage, and embarked in a gig. The commander of the *City of Peking* did not stay to read the signals, but, seeing a boat put off from a man-of-war, concluded that it could be nothing short of an officer with important dispatches, and came to a stand-still, to discover, however, that it was only to pick up a man "escaped from Siberia." San Francisco was reached in sixteen days. From thence I visited the Yo-Semite Valley, Salt Lake City, Chicago, and Niagara; and then, pushing on to New York, crossed the Atlantic to Liverpool, and on November 25th re-entered London, having compassed the world in nearly a straight line of 25,500 miles.

GRATIAS DEO.

APPENDIX A.

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

(*From page* 162.)

THE history of the Russian Church may be treated under the four periods of its foundation, consolidation, transition, and reformation. Its foundation period extends from the end of the tenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth. In the year 957 a Russian princess, named Olga, visited Constantinople, was baptized, and returned with the Christian name of Helena. About thirty years afterwards there came to her grandson, Vladimir, envoys from the different religious communities of the known world,—from the Mussulmans, the Pope, the Jews, the Greeks,—inviting him to adopt their respective creeds. To these he replied by sending elders and nobles to examine their various religions; and shortly afterwards, in 988, he was baptized and joined the Greek Church. Vladimir then gave orders for a wholesale baptism of his docile subjects at Kieff. A church was built there, and the work of conversion advanced rapidly. The Holy Scriptures had been translated into Sclavonic a century before for the nations on the Danube; so that the Greek priests, on going to Russia, had this powerful lever ready to hand in the language of the people.

The period of the *consolidation* of the Russian Church dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, during which time the local centre of ecclesiastical history was transferred from Kieff to Moscow, and three great powers came prominently forward—the Tsars, the Metropolitans, and the Monks. The Tsar, in his ecclesiastical position, represented the laity of the Church,

and received the unbounded veneration of the people ; and the Metropolitans, second only to the Tsar, almost without exception supported the authority of the Sovereign. In the middle of the fifteenth century the Metropolitans became independent of the See of Constantinople ; and in 1589, Job, the Metropolitan of Moscow, was elevated to the dignity of a patriarch. Again, the hermits and monks acquired an immense influence. In 1338 was founded the famous Troitza monastery—a seminary, cathedral, church, and fortress all in one—the monks and clergy of which have more than once taken an active part in the deliverance of their country from the Tatars and Poles.

The *transition* period of the Russian Church extends from the middle of the seventeenth to the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, during which time lived Nikon, the famous Patriarch of Moscow. He has been called a Russian Chrysostom, a Russian Luther, a Russian Wolsey. Ivan the Terrible, in his own savage way, had done something towards rectifying the abuses of the Church. The Patriarch did more ; he took in hand the Russian hierarchy, whom he found idle and drunken. He set them a good example, on one hand, by founding hospitals, feeding the hungry, visiting prisons, and, above all, after the silence of many centuries, by preaching ; but, on the other hand, he administered clerical discipline with uncommon severity. He was perpetually sending his officers round the city, with orders that, if they found priest or monk in a state of intoxication, they were to imprison, strip, and scourge him ; and numbers of dissolute clergy he banished to Siberia. His name, however, is chiefly remembered by reason of his innovations, or perhaps resuscitation of forgotten details in ritual. Finding that copyists' errors had crept into the service books, which were in manuscript, he sent deputations to Mount Athos, and throughout the Eastern Churches, for correct copies, put the printing press to work to circulate new rubrics, and set on foot a work of revision, which met with frantic opposition on the part of the ignorant among the people, and was ultimately made the occasion of the secession of a large part

of what are now known as the Russian *raskolniks*, or dissenters.

The fourth period, which has been called—though, alas! in only a very limited sense—the *reformation* of the Russian Church, extends from the time of Peter the Great to our own day. The patriarchate had attained to a position of great power, and the great Peter was not the man to brook such a rival as Nikon had been to his father Alexis; accordingly, on the death of the Patriarch Adrian, in 1700, his chair was allowed to remain vacant for twenty years, at the end of which time Peter abolished the patriarchate and appointed a synod. He also carried out many reforms and improvements, which he had the good sense to see were sorely needed. He established schools for the children of the clergy, abolished anchorites, reformed the monasteries, and issued regulations enjoining bishops to read the Scriptures carefully, and not to be absent from their dioceses without permission of the synod. Many of his changes, however, excited great dissatisfaction. The measures of Nikon had sadly perturbed the orthodox Russians; those of Peter drove them to desperation and to further schism. Among the charges brought against the Tsar were such as these: that he had introduced into the churches pictures by Western artists; and this was said to be a mortal sin. Besides this, at the opening of the eighteenth century, Peter changed the calendar, gave his people the 1st of January for their New Year's Day, and began to reckon the year from the birth of Christ instead of from the creation of the world. This, among other like things, was regarded as the very sign of Antichrist, inasmuch as he was "to change times and laws"; and Peter the Great is still designated Antichrist by a large proportion of the Russian dissenters. Since the time of the great reformer the Russian Church has gone on very much as he left it, the few minor reforms introduced by the Emperors Alexander the First and Second being in the right direction.

APPENDIX B.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE RUSSIAN, ROMAN, AND ENGLISH CHURCHES.

(*From page* 163.)

THE doctrines of the Russian Church are not set forth in any one public document like the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion," but must be sought in its creeds, councils, Church services, and catechisms. Generally speaking, it may be said that the Bible and tradition form the Russian rule of faith, and excommunication is the penalty of heterodoxy. The Nicene Creed we know the Russians receive, with the exception of the clause relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son; and the Athanasian Creed finds a place in their Church books, though it is not read in the public services. There are likewise certain works by eminent Russian divines which have been promulgated or received with more or less authority by councils or the general consent of the Eastern Church. Such are the treatise of St. John Damascene on the Orthodox Faith; the Answers of the Patriarch Jeremiah to the Lutherans, 1574—1581; Peter Mogila's Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East, 1643—1662; the Eighteen Articles of the Synod of Bethlehem, 1672; and the Orthodox Doctrine of Platon, 1762. We get a better insight, however, into the doctrines of the Russian Church, as they are taught in the present day, from Mr. Blackmore's translation of the Russian Primer, the Catechisms, and the Treatise on the Duty of Parish Priests—a perusal of which last seems to me to bring the Russian Church nearer to the English, and further from the Roman, than is generally supposed. Some idea of the divergences of the three Churches will be obtained by briefly enumerating their differences, thus:—

1. The principal differences between the Russian and English Church are upon—

(1) The number of the Œcumenical Councils.
(2) The number of the sacraments.
(3) Confirmation by priests.
(4) Marriage of clergy after ordination.
(5) Consecration of married priests to the episcopate.
(6) Transubstantiation.
(7) Invocation of saints.
(8) Reverence to sacred pictures and relics.
(9) Prayer for the faithful departed.
(10) The procession of the Holy Ghost.

2. The differences between the Russian and English Churches on one side, and the Roman on the other, are upon—

(1) Papal supremacy.
(2) Purgatory.
(3) Communion in one kind.
(4) Celibacy of priests and deacons.
(5) Indulgences.
(6) Works of supererogation.
(7) Judicial absolution.
(8) The doctrine of intention in priestly acts.
(9) The Apocrypha.
(10) Service in an unknown tongue.
(11) Withdrawal of the Scriptures from the laity.
(12) Use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.
(13) The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.
(14) Papal infallibility.

3. Once more, the differences between the English Church and the Russian and Roman combined are upon—

(1) The number of the sacraments.
(2) Married bishops.
(3) Invocation of saints.
(4) Reverence of pictures and relics.
(5) Prayer for the faithful departed.
(6) Compulsory confession.

These are some of the principal differences between the three branches of the Catholic Church, besides which there are others connected with usage and ritual.

APPENDIX C.

THE SCHISMS OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

(*From page* 163.)

IT cannot be denied that there is a very considerable amount of toleration of foreign religions in the Russian Empire. The Tsar does not emulate the Roman Pontiff, who, as long as he could prevent it, which was up to about 12 years ago, would not allow a Protestant place of worship to be built within the walls of his capital. On the contrary, at the fair of Nijni Novgorod, the Mohammedan mosque and the Armenian church stand side by side with the orthodox cathedral, and I am not sure that I did not see in the Chinese quarter a Buddhist temple. Notwithstanding all this, however, the religious toleration of the Tsar is of a somewhat one-sided character. A man is usually left in peace to practise the religion in which he was born, so long as he does not try to proselytize. Again, should an English Churchman, or any one else living in Russia, be convinced that the Greek Church is more scriptural and catholic than his own, the Greek Church will receive him into her communion. But not *vice versâ*. On the contrary, should a Russian Churchman living in Russia be convinced that the English Church is more scriptural and catholic than his own, and should he attempt to carry out his convictions, he would thereby render himself liable, I believe, to expatriation, confiscation of property, and other pains and penalties too dreadful to mention; and to receive the convert into the English Church would be more than the Chaplain at Petersburg or Moscow dare do. Again, in mixed marriages—that is, when either father *or* mother is "orthodox"—the children *must* be orthodox, and follow the religion of the State. Russians abroad sometimes change their religious profession,

in which case they remain Russian subjects, but are not permitted to return to their country unless they recant.

The matter therefore stands thus, that whilst the Russian Church is ready to receive from all, she gives to none—that is, if she can help it. Consequently, what she will not give, there are some who choose to take. The rich, who are possessed of broad acres, be they ever so convinced that some of the doctrines of the Greek Church are unscriptural and uncatholic, naturally think twice before they render their estates liable to confiscation. But there are others, who have less to lose, for whom confiscation has no such terrors; or, if it has, dare to face them, and bid the law do its worst.

Persecution, however, such as we have known in England, has never been a characteristic of the Church of Russia. I do not mean that her repressive measures have never taken a form which can with difficulty be distinguished from persecution. But she has never had an Inquisition; neither Petersburg nor Moscow has a Smithfield; and the plains of Russia have never heard such cries as once resounded through the valleys of Piedmont. On the whole, I am disposed to think that, in religious matters at all events, the hug of the bear is not so bad as might be expected from his growl; and that the powers that be, when they see a religious point cannot be carried, meet the difficulty half-way.

I left Siberia in a Russian man-of-war, and heard a story that will illustrate this. Formerly the law obtained in the Russian navy that all the seamen should have shaven chins. Now, at the Council of Moscow in the seventeenth century, to shave the beard was pronounced "a sin which even the blood of martyrs could not expiate"; and some of the Russian dissenters still believe that to cut the hair or the beard is altogether unscriptural and unorthodox. Accordingly, one fine day two recruits appeared in the navy with flowing beards. They were ordered to cut them off, but they obstinately refused. Their insubordination was reported to higher quarters, and an order was returned that the men must shave or be shaved. The men still refused, and in consequence were shaved, to the saving of their consciences, but the loss

of their beards. But nature gave them new ones, and the difficulty came up again, the men once more refusing to obey orders. Their obstinacy was again reported, this time to very high authorities—to one of the Grand Dukes, if not to the Emperor himself—when it occurred to one of them, in his wisdom, to ask *why* these men should be made to shave; and, no satisfactory answer being forthcoming, another question followed—why should *any* of the men be made to shave? and shortly there went forth a regulation that, throughout the whole of the navy, men should be left to do as they liked with their beards. So in many things respecting religion: when the Government of the present day cannot carry a point, they not unfrequently give it up, or cease what looks like active persecution.

The Russians have, however, certain fanatical sects to deal with, whose tenets are so outrageous that no enlightened Government could do otherwise than try to repress them. Some of their ideas are sufficiently ludicrous. "Cursed be the man," said one of these people to an acquaintance of mine—"Cursed be the man who presumes to pray to God in a pair of trousers!" from which, I suppose, we are to infer that in public worship these individuals think it right to divest themselves of their nether garments. I am not aware, however, that persons such as these are persecuted. Among the fanatical sects also are the Scoptsi, some of whom are banished to a village on the Yenesei. There are certain sectarians also who have no settled home, but wander about as strangers and pilgrims. We met some of them in the Siberian wilds. The great mass, however, of the Raskolniks, or Russian dissenters, estimated at eight millions in number, are very different from those I have mentioned.

When, in the seventeenth century, the Patriarch Nikon began to have the Church books revised and corrected, he met with fierce opposition. He was charged with interpolating instead of correcting the books, and nothing would persuade many of the ignorant people to the contrary. Many thus became unsettled and broke away—not, they would say, because they were leaving the Church, but because the Church,

with its new-fangled notions, was leaving them. Then when, in addition to Nikon's changes, Peter the Great introduced others, things were looked upon as becoming worse than ever. There was, accordingly, a large section of the most ultra-Conservative Russians, both of priests and people, who clung to old books, old pictures, and old ways, under the impression that thus only could they worship God according to the customs of their forefathers; and it is from these secessionists that the great mass of the *Staroveri*, or Old Believers, are descended. We heard, at Tiumen, that some are very strict in their habits of living; that, for instance, they will not drink tea or wine, and will not drink out of the same vessel with one who is not of their sect. The Staroveri are split into two principal parties. They had a bishop with them at the time of their secession, and he ordained many priests; but as these priests died they asked. How shall we fill their places? They had no second bishop to ordain more. Some decided that they would do without priests, and these are called *Bezpopoftschins*, or priestless. The others for a time got priests from the Established Church as best they could, but eventually came to a compromise with the Government, and, by certain concessions made to them, saved their scruples and obtained their priests. These are called *Popoftschins*. The differences, however, between both parties on the one side, and the Established Church on the other, were not questions of doctrine, but such points as these: the Starovers gave the benediction holding up two fingers, the established clergy holding up three, which latter practice was regarded by the Old Believers as a mortal sin. The Starovers' form of the cross had three transverse beams, instead of the Russian two or the Latin one. Again, to say the name of Jesus in two syllables instead of three (as in Greek) was condemned by the Starovers, as was also the repetition of the hallelujah in the service thrice instead of twice. It became also an alarming innovation to read or write, for ecclesiastical purposes, a word in modern Russ. I had a reminder of this in 1878 on the Dwina, where Old Believers exist, for I sometimes

found my tracts objected to because not printed in Sclavonic.

But there are many among the Raskolniks of Russia who dissent from the Established Church on points less diminutive than those of the Starovers; as the *Dukhobortsi*, or "wrestlers with the Spirit," who spiritualize to a high degree both doctrines and sacraments. Also they reject pictures, do not cross themselves, nor observe the appointed fasts. In their meetings they pray for one another, sing psalms, and explain the Word of God. They call themselves "Christians," and their great dogma is to worship God in spirit and in truth. They have no magistrates, but govern their own society; they practise brotherly love, have all things common, and are remarkable for the orderly and cleanly manner in which they live. An officer whom I met last year in the Caucasus spoke to me in the highest terms of their blameless lives.

There are many other sects of the Russian Church, many followers of which are found in Siberia, either because banished or born there, or having migrated by their own choice for the sake of greater liberty. Not the least interesting among them are the *Molokans*, some of whom I found on the Amur, and others more recently in the Trans-Caucasus.

APPENDIX D.

THE DISCOVERIES OF WIGGINS AND NORDENSKJOLD.

(*From page* 196.)

FROM various papers in the Proceedings of the Society for the Promotion of Marine Enterprise and Trade in Russia, together with information gathered by Mr. Oswald Cattley, it seems that Mr. M. K. Sidoroff of Petersburg was the agitator, and, in a certain sense, the originator, in modern times, of sea-trading adventure in the north of the Russian empire. He was largely interested in gold-mining in the Yenesei, and his efforts to open up marine communication with the north date from 1841. In 1860, thanks to his enterprise, the first foreign vessel entered the Bay of Petchora. At the Universal Exhibition of 1862, in London, Mr. Sidoroff exhibited, and obtained two medals for, products from the Turukhansk district—graphite, skins, coal, salt, mammoth tusks, etc.—all of which he presented to the South Kensington Museum. In 1867 he began agitating the possibility of communicating with Europe by sea *viâ* the Yenesei and Obi rivers and the Arctic Ocean. In 1868 he communicated with the Norwegian whalers, and at his initiative Captains Foyne, Carlsen, and others ventured into the Kara Sea, but none reached to the mouth of either of the two great rivers. This success was to be reaped by Captain Wiggins, of Sunderland, who fitted out, at his own expense, a small steamer, the *Diana*, in which he reached the mouth of the Obi in 1874. He was resolved upon repeating the voyage in 1875, and to that end invited capitalists to assist him in organizing a trade between Siberia and England. These overtures were not successful to any considerable extent, though two gentlemen came forward with subscriptions in Sunderland, and the captain added more from his own means; but the whole amounted to

less than was needed for efficient operations. Determined, however, not to be baffled, Wiggins purchased a small cutter, the *Whim*, that might have been put in a good-sized drawing-room (it was only 45 feet long, and of 27 tons register!), and in *that* he sailed direct for the Kara Sea. The weather was adverse, and he was compelled to return in the autumn of 1875. Another explorer, however, had followed suit, for Professor Nordenskjold, seeing what Wiggins had done in 1874, took the same track in 1875, and reached the mouth of the Yenesei. Thence he sent back his walrus sloop to Hammerfest, ascended the river, and returned overland to Petersburg.

Captain Wiggins was now asked to meet his brother explorer, Nordenskjold, at Petersburg, where they both addressed crowded audiences; after which the Russian merchants offered subscriptions towards the equipment of another expedition, under the command of Captain Wiggins, who was to return at once to England and secure a steamer suitable to the work. But jealousy of a "foreign element" subsequently seized some of the Russian merchants, and they desired that a Russian naval officer should head the expedition—in other words, that Captain Wiggins should be pilot, which he declined. Many of the Russian subscriptions were in consequence withheld, but not that of Mr. Sibiriakof, who placed his money in the hands of the editor of the *Times*. This money, with the assistance furnished by Mr. Gardiner, of Goring, enabled Wiggins to attempt a third voyage, and he now purchased the screw-steamer *Thames*—doing so, however, under protest, for she was not the vessel he ought to have had. In this, in 1876, he started for the mouth of the Obi, and reached it; but, owing to the unsuitability of his ship, he could not ascend the river. He lay, therefore, in the Baidaratsky Gulf of the Kara Sea, employing himself usefully in making nautical surveys, dredging, etc. He then directed his course to the Yenesei, entered the river, and reached the village of Dudinsk, about 400 miles from the ocean. Here he was informed that the nearest port or river of safety was the

Kureika. I have since been told, by one in Siberia, that this was a mistake, the river not being a suitable place for winter quarters. But the captain proceeded without chart, without pilot; time was of importance; and he had not got his steamer into the Kureika more than two or three days before the ice formed, and she was locked up for eight months. This had been anticipated; and the captain now returned overland, post-haste to London, which he reached in January 1877.

Meanwhile Professor Nordenskjold had also been following up his discoveries, in proceeding again to the Yenesei, in 1876, with an object mostly, but not entirely, scientific. It was arranged that his expedition, consisting of Swedish geologists, botanists, zoologists, and men of science, should be divided into two parties; one going with the Professor, in the steamship *Ymar*, through the Kara Sea, was to enter the mouth of the river and ascend to Mesenkin; whilst the other party, under the direction of M. Théel, was to proceed overland to Krasnoiarsk, and then descend the river to meet their comrades. The Professor ascended to Mesenkin, but M. Théel could not get so far. The two parties therefore failed to effect a meeting; but they added much valuable information to what had been hitherto known of the natural history of the Yenesei, and which was printed in two reports—the one from Professor Nordenskjold, and the other from M. Théel, addressed to Messrs. Oscar Dickson, of Gothenburg, and Alexander Sibiriakoff, at whose joint expense the expedition had been sent.

In the spring of 1877 Wiggins went overland from England through Siberia, and down the Yenesei to the *Thames*, intending to steam back to Europe. But the vessel was damaged by the breaking-up of the ice, and became a wreck; and Wiggins was once more compelled to return by land. He had been accompanied on the outward journey by Mr. Henry Seebohm, who proceeded to the Yenesei to study its ornithology, and who has since published some of the results of his researches, as well as a book called "Siberia in Europe," on the ornithology of North-eastern Russia and

part of Siberia. Besides these travellers and their journeys, there have been several voyages undertaken, with a view to bring Siberia into maritime contact with Europe. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* for November 28th, 1878, records several voyages as having been made up to that time, with more or less success; and thus from the years 1875 to 1878 we learnt more than had ever been previously known of these two ancient rivers, the Obi and the Yenesei—to which latter, another vessel has made its way during the present year.

That Western Siberia is capable of being made to play an important part in the supply of European markets seems certain. The country possesses immense stores of minerals, from gold down to excellent coal, and agricultural produce both of fibre and cereals, the latter including wheat, to be purchased at from 12 to 15 shillings per quarter, first hand, which in England commands from 45 to 50 shillings. A thousand miles of land between the Tobol and the Obi is capable of producing an almost unlimited supply of wheat, oats, barley, rye, hay, linseed, flax, and hemp; and to these might be added for export, to be purchased very cheaply, hides, tallow, wool, and other products. Already, on the rivers of the Obi system alone, there are no less than 46 passenger and tug steamers plying annually, and ranging from 30 up to 120 horse-power. If, then, two central warehouses could be established, at, say, Tiumen and Tomsk, it would be easy from thence to purchase and carry produce to the mouth of the Obi. The difficult part of the navigation lies between the mouth of the Obi and the Kara or the Waigatz Straits, west of the Kara Sea; and what is required is a powerful steamer, adapted for working among ice if needed, to ply between the Obi Gulf and a depôt, say, on Waigatz Island, or even at the North Cape, whence ordinary vessels could bring the produce away. The ice steamer might then, in her last voyage for the season, return with foreign merchandise, to be sold at the establishments in the interior, and, in February, at the annual fair of Irbit where merchants congregate from all parts of Siberia. Mr. Seebohm

goes so far as to say that, could the talked-of canal be formed from the Obi Gulf across the Yamal peninsula, it might prove almost as important as that across the Isthmus of Suez. Captain Wiggins thinks the canal impracticable, but is sanguine as to the possibilities of trade on the Obi; and it has been computed by Mr. Oswald Cattley that with a strong steamer, a tug, six barges, and a couple of lighters, there might be exported from Siberia, in a single navigation season, 6,000 tons of wheat; but, of course, this would involve the outlay of considerable capital, and the location of responsible agents in the country.

APPENDIX E.

THE EARLY EXPLORATION OF SIBERIA BY SEA AND LAND.

THE north-east passage to China was attempted as far back as the 16th century, after the discovery of America had given such zest to geographical exploration. Willoughby, Chancellor, and Burroughs started on a route indicated to them by Sebastian Cabot, but with the result that Willoughby perished in 1554; Chancellor landed in the White Sea and laid the foundation of Anglo-Russian commerce; and Burroughs was stopped before entering the Kara Sea. Thinking that China might, perhaps, be reached by way of the Obi gulf, thence up the river, and by a fabulous lake of Kitai (or China) marked upon the map of Herberstein, the English renewed their efforts. In 1580 two English ships, commanded by Pet and Jackman, sailed towards the Russian Polar Seas, their navigators being counselled by Hakluyt and Mercator, the foremost geographers of their day; but both were baffled by the ice of the Kara Sea. The Dutch were not more fortunate, and in the three voyages, in which the illustrious Barentz took part, 1594-1597, no progress was effected beyond the Seas of Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. In 1608, the Dutch Hendrick Hudson, sailing in the English service, endeavoured but in vain to pass the limits where his predecessors had been stopped, and after his name should be mentioned those of Wood and Flawes, bringing us to 1676. There was subsequently a lull in the efforts made by the navigators of Western Europe for two centuries, and then we have the voyage in the *Tegetthoff*, under Payer and Weyprecht. The fishermen and Russian merchants from

the White Sea, however, knew perfectly the route to the gulfs of the Obi and Yenesei. Of this there is proof in the map of Boris Godunof in the year 1600, although it is true that to travel by this route was forbidden sixteen years later under pain of death, lest the Russians should pilot foreigners to the coasts of Siberia.

Cut off thus by a frozen sea, the sailing of which was considered by the navigators and geographers of Western Europe an impossibility, the exploration of the North Siberian littoral could go on only from Siberia itself, which was done by means of river craft. In 1648, the Cossack Dejnev, leaving the mouth of the Kolima in command of a little fleet of seven boats, had succeeded in rounding the extreme northern point of Asia, and in clearing, long before Behring was born, the strait which bears the name of that navigator. Stadoukhin also traversed the seas of Eastern Siberia, looking for islands covered with fossil ivory, of which the natives had told him. In 1735 Prontchichtchev and Lasinius descended the Lena to examine its delta and coast along to the east and west. The former proceeded round Cape Cheliuskin (so named after his pilot), but did not reach the Yenesei Gulf, and the expedition brought back their leader's corpse. Again, an expedition set out in 1739 under Laptev, and, after being shipwrecked, crossed overland the most northern cape of the Old World, and explored the Taimur peninsula. The littoral between the estuaries of the Obi and Yenesei was discovered two years previously by Ovtzin and Minin.

Navigation towards the Siberian Sea had already commenced, however, by way of the Pacific. In 1728 Behring, a Dane in the Russian service, crossed Siberia by land, and, embarking on the Pacific, penetrated the famous straits which bear his name, and it was through him that the geographers of Western Europe learned the existence of this passage, already known for eighty years to the Siberian Cossacks; but the archives of Yakutsk had so closely kept the secret that the great Peter himself did not know it when he charged Behring to go and explore the coasts of Eastern Siberia.

The explorations of Cook, in 1778, confirmed the points laid down by Behring, and added much to our knowledge of these north-eastern waters. After the voyage of Cook, only the seas about Sakhalin, Yesso, and the Kuriles remained to be explored. La Perouse laid down the first tracing of the islands and the shores of the continent, and he recognized the insular character of Sakhalin and the existence of a passage uniting the seas of Japan and Okhotsk.

Thus all the coast lines of Siberia were mapped out as to their principal features, and there matters remained until, at the instance of Mr. Sidoroff, in 1868, some Norwegian whalers ventured to the Kara Sea, which, however, was not successfully navigated, I believe, by an *ocean* craft till 1874, when Captain Wiggins accomplished it by steam. He reached the gulf of the Obi, and would willingly have steamed on to "the land of Kitai," but he was unsupported by such enterprise as sent out Willoughby, Chancellor, and Burroughs, and the rose was honorably snatched from the Englishman's hand by Nordenskjold, the Swedo-Finn, whose voyage may, in a manner, be said to have closed the maritime discovery of Siberia.

The scientific exploration of this vast country by land can hardly be said to have commenced till the 18th century, with Messerschmidt. Some years later, Gmelin, Müller, and Delisle de la Croyère, during an absence of nine years, from 1733 to 1742, recorded valuable observations on the physical geography of the country. In those days, however, the Russian Government regarded with considerable jealousy the publication of documents relative to the resources of the empire. Pallas travelled over Siberia to the Baikal and beyond, with several scientists, and brought back much valuable information, especially concerning geology and natural history. Scientific travels in Siberia were then suspended till after the political events of 1815. In 1828 the Norwegian Hansteen, accompanied by Erman, went on those travels which proved of such importance to the study of terrestrial magnetism, whilst Erman's astronomical determinations were of great use in correcting the maps which

hitherto had been only approximately correct. Humboldt went to Siberia when Hansteen and Erman were there; and though his visit, by reason of its shortness, was not very fruitful in observations, it proved important in the history of science, because he brought back documents which proved valuable for his work on Central Asia. The explorations of Middendorf in Northern and Eastern Siberia had considerable importance, and in 1854 Schwartz, Schmidt, Glehn, Usoltzoff, and their companions made a remarkable expedition, which explored the immense region stretching from the Za-Baikal to the Lena, including the northern affluents of the Amur.

These are some of the prominent names connected with the scientific exploration of Siberia in general. Several specialists also have pushed their way to various parts of the country—Castren the philologist to the Samoyede country, 1842-3; Maack, Venyukoff, and Radde, to the Amur and Ussuri, 1854-9; Müller and Czekanovski to the country of the Chukchees, 1869-70, and to the Yenesei in 1873-4. Two years later Seebohm, the ornithologist, descended the Yenesei, as also did the Swedish expedition under Professor Théil; and in the same year Finsch, Brehm, and Zeil explored the basin of the Irtish and Obi. For the names of other travellers in Northern Asia the reader is referred to the Bibliography of Siberia, and list of works consulted, in the following appendix.

P.S.—This appendix was written before the publication of "The Voyage of the *Vega* round Asia and Europe, with an Historical Review of Previous Voyages along the North Coast of the Old World. By A. E. Nordenskjold," whose book will doubtless be regarded as a standard work, and to it, accordingly, the reader is referred for fuller information on the maritime coast of Siberia.

APPENDIX F.

THE AUTHOR'S ITINERARY ROUND THE WORLD.

THE following shows the dates of the Author's arrivals and departures, with distances in miles travelled by rail, water, and road, together with the number of post-horses employed :—

DATES.	PLACES.	RAIL.	WATER.	ROAD.	HORSES.
April 30 to May 3	London to Petersburg	1,683	23	...	...
May 12 „ 13	Petersburg to Moscow	402	...	...	...
„ 14 „ 15	Moscow to Nijni Novgorod	273	...	...	...
„ 16 „ 17	Nijni Novgorod to Kasan	...	266	...	...
„ 19 „ 22	Kasan to Perm	...	686	...	...
„ 22 „ 24	Perm to Ekaterineburg	312	...	...	...
„ 27 „ 29	Ekaterineburg to Tiumen	...	...	204	74
„ 30 „ June 1	Tiumen to Tobolsk	...	...	172	65
June 3 „ 10	Tobolsk to Tomsk	...	1,601	...	...
„ 12 „ 15	Tomsk to Barnaul	...	...	238	51
„ 16 „ 18	Barnaul to Tomsk	...	...	238	51
„ 19 „ 24	Tomsk to Krasnoiarsk	...	...	369	165
„ 26 „ 27	Krasnoiarsk to Gold-mine and back	...	...	24	...
„ 27 „ July 6	Krasnoiarsk to Irkutsk	...	...	671	267
July 4 „ 5	Telma to Alexandreffsky and back	...	...	32	...
„ 10 „ 14	Irkutsk to Kiakhta	...	...	312	80
„ 15	Kiakhta to Cheelantoui and back	...	...	54	...
„ 16 „ 18	Kiakhta to Verchne-Udinsk	...	...	148	35
„ 18 „ 21	Verchne-Udinsk to Chita	...	...	294	114
„ 21 „ 24	Chita to Stretinsk	...	...	[illegible]	[illegible]

July 24 to Aug. 3			...	...	40	...
„ 25 „ 28	Kara		...	...	...	...
Aug. 9 „ 13	Khabarofka to Nikolaefsk		...	628	...	...
„ 31 „ Sept. 4	Nikolaefsk to Khabarofka		...	628	...	...
Sept. 6 „ 11	Khabarofka to Kamen-Ruiboloff		...	510	...	...
„ 11 „ 12	Kamen-Ruiboloff to Rasdolnoi		...		88	27
„ 15	Rasdolnoi to Vladivostock		...	66	...	...
			2,670	5,753 SEA MILES.	3,132	1,005
Sept. 30 „ Oct. 4	Vladivostock to Hakodate		...	553	...	...
Oct. 4 „ 11	Hakodate to Yokohama		...	645	...	...
„ 11 „ 27	Yokohama to San Francisco		...	5,261	...	...
„ 29 „ Nov. 5	San Francisco to Ogden		883	...	...	...
„ 29 „ Nov. 3	Lathrop to Yo-Semite Valley and back		182	...	170	...
Nov. 5 „ 6	Ogden to Salt Lake City and back		74	...	...	...
„ 6 „ 8	Ogden to Omaha		1,032	...	...	...
„ 8 „ 9	Omaha to Chicago		502	...	...	...
„ 10 „ 13	Chicago to New York		961	...	...	...
„ 15 „ 25	New York to Liverpool		...	3,482	...	...
„ 25	Liverpool to Blackheath		207	...	3	...
			6,511	15,694	3,305	1,005
				25,510		

From the foregoing it will appear that the total distance travelled was 25,510 miles, of which 3,305 miles were accomplished by the hire of 1,005 post-horses. The whole time occupied was 210 days. of these, 50 days were stationary; thus leaving 160 days, during which was covered an average of 159 miles per day.

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"In some ways Mr. Lansdell has a better right to speak about Siberia than any previous western traveller. He went right through the country, from Tiumen on the Ural boundary, to Nikolaefsk on the Pacific coast. . . . His views upon the Russian penal system are undoubtedly founded upon honest personal conviction. . . . Apart even from its main subject, it teems with useful information about the country and the people, some tribes of which Mr. Lansdell has perhaps been the first so fully to describe."

The Fireside. (*Three pages.*)

"As a work of rare interest, we commend to our readers Mr. Lansdell's charming traveller's story, a book of which three-fourths of the first edition were sold before it had fairly reached the publishers' counter. . . . That he has succeeded in gathering a mass of reliable information is evident; for a Russian Inspector of Prisons writes respecting the proof-sheets of the work: 'What you say is so perfectly correct, that your book may be taken as a standard even by Russian authorities.'"

Fraser's Magazine. (*Thirteen pages.*)

"It is no more than the simple truth which Mr. Lansdell speaks when he claims that he is in a unique position among all those who have written on the subject. He has gone where he pleased in Siberia. . . . . His testimony, therefore, is simply the best that exists. . . . . Of course it is difficult to hope that his testimony will be accepted by everyone; there are too many who, as a popular proverb says, 'love truth, but invite the lie to dinner.' But I have faith that the majority of Englishmen will perceive the untrustworthiness of Nihilistic and Polish sources. If I am wrong. it would only prove that public opinion, even in England, has lost its value." O. K. (a *Russian* writer.)

NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

Harper's Monthly Magazine. (*One column.*)

"Since the time of Howard, no one has given us so full and fair an account of Russian prisons as is now presented to us by Mr. Lansdell, and like Howard, he finds the Russians far less cruel jailers than they are generally credited or discredited with being."

The Baptist. (*Two columns.*)

"The effect of Mr. Lansdell's laborious investigations from one end of the country to the other cannot but be salutary, and cannot, we are disposed to think, fail to promote a good understanding between Russia and other countries. . . . . It is strange, but none the less true, that no government in the world has been so ludicrously misrepresented as the Russian, and a man who undertakes to set matters in a true light before the eyes of the world deserves the gratitude of all parties. This Mr. Lansdell has done, and his book will rank as a leading book of the season."

The Saturday Review. (*Three columns.*)

"Mr. Lansdell is an acute and eager traveller, as well as an ardent philanthropist. . . . His journey . . . was one of great interest, great adventure, and great endurance. The numerous and clever illustrations with which the volumes are adorned add very much to their value. We take leave of our author in the hope that, on the one hand, neither his philanthropy nor his love of travelling is exhausted; and that, on the other hand, his first venture in the world of letters may be so favourable as to tempt him to a second venture, though perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale."

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